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FORMULA 1 '97, RAPID RACER, NIGHTMARE CREATURES & FANTASTIC FOUR



Official UK

PlayStation Magazine

No. 24

F1 '97 The Winning Formula?

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW AND DEMO

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in Europe

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Start up

WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH'S CD?



Only one disc this month. But what a disc it is – an exclusive, playable demo of *F1 '97*, the brilliant racing sequel from Psygnosis. Plus a few other offerings that will make you very happy.

EXCLUSIVE DEMOS 7 Vol. 2

PAL

PLAYABLE

FORMULA 1 '97

Find out for yourself whether this really is the best racing game ever.

PLAYABLE

RAPID RACER

Or could this white-knuckle ride pour water on F1's burning rubber?

PLAYABLE

FANTASTIC FOUR

Can you make a fist of A-Team's latest side-scrolling beat 'em up?

PLAYABLE

NIGHTMARE CREATURES

Stalk the streets of old London town in this epic 3D adventure.

VIDEO

ROSCO McQUEEN

Take a behind-the-scenes look at the PlayStation's hosepipe hero.

PlayStation™



Formula 1 '97 Playable

If you thought the original was good – and let's face it, it was superb – then this will just blow you away.

Rapid Racer Playable

Check out the clever wave replication in this speedy water-based racing game.

Nightmare Creatures Playable

Sounds like a nightmare, but plays like a dream.

Fantastic Four Playable

Find out if this scrolling beat 'em up really is fantastic.

Rosco McQueen Rolling

Great video footage of Rosco in top fire-fighting action.



They say pride comes before a fall. As autumn draws near, however, it is pride before THE Fall for us here at *PSM*. As the summer – traditionally a quiet time for videogames magazines – comes to a close, figures have been announced with regard to copy sales of magazines throughout the UK. And with a whopping 146,972 issues sold, on average, every month over the 'quiet' summer period, the *Official UK PlayStation Magazine* is now over 100,000 copies ahead of our nearest PlayStation rivals. Now with winter on the way, we can really start selling some copies.

And to ensure we stay at the very top, we have a brilliant exclusive for you, this month, with the first review and demo of *F1 '97*, the sequel to Psygnosis' phenomenally successful racing game. Read all about it on pages 94–101.

Thanks for buying the magazine. Rest assured, you're not alone.

Rob Pegley

Rob Pegley (Editor)

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Editorial

Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth
Street, Bath, Somerset BA1 2BW
Telephone 01225 442244
Fax 01225 732274
E-mail PSM@futurenet.co.uk

Subscriptions

Future Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST
354900, Somerton, Somerset TA117BR
Telephone 01225 822510/1
Fax 01458 274378

The PSM team

Editor: Rob Pegley
pegley@futurenet.co.uk
Art editor: Lam Tang
Deputy editor: Steve Bradley
Production editor: Lisa Morris
Production assistants: Milford Coppock, Alvin
Veetman
Always on the phone: Andrew Collins
Contributors: Steve Faragher, Zy
Scholson, Andy Butcher, Dave
Roberts, Jon Palmer, Paul Pettengale,
Adeon Kibblewhite, Quay Publishing,
Nicolas Di Costanza & Colin Campbell
Group ad manager: Simon Moss
Ad manager: Anne Green
Classified sales: Viv Thomas
Ad fax: 01225 480325
Publicity: Liz Ramsay
Publicity tel: 0171 331 3920
Marketing manager: Gill Stevenson
Publisher: Dave Roberts
Asst publisher: Dom Beaven
Overseas Licensing: Chris Power
Overseas Tel: +44 (0) 171 331 3920

Production

Production coordinator: Manuela Green
Production manager: Richard Gingell
Production fax: 01225 423118
Design: Michelle Trewavas
Group production manager: Judith Green
Print coordinator: Jez Fisher
Pre-press services manager: Jon Moore
Typesetter and scanning
Service manager: Brian Hook
Pre-press services: Mark Gover, Jason
Kiley, Oliver Gibbs
Colour scanning: Jonathan Wakeham,
Simon Windsor, Chris Stocker
Managing Director: Greg Ingham
Chairman: Nick Alexander
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The Official UK PlayStation Magazine is dedicated to bringing its readers the most up-to-date information on all aspects of PlayStation gaming. Close links with Sony Computer Entertainment give us exclusive access to the very latest software and news, plus the coveted official demo CD which graces the magazine every month. Our game reviews are the most in-depth, honest and authoritative in the market, offering independent, unbiased buying advice. PSM: the biggest-selling videogames magazine in the UK.



Magical Mystery Tour: come explore the RPGs...



Formula 1 '97



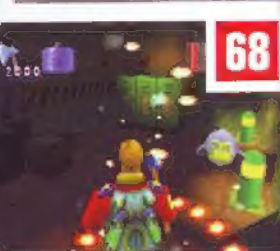
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Update

UK's fastest-growing magazine — it's *Official* PSM records massive circulation figures

Excuse us while we assume smug expressions here at *PSM*, and bask in industry glory for five minutes of well-deserved fame, but this

month the big news within the world of PlayStation is the very magazine you hold in your hands at this moment.

The annual ABC (Audited Bureau of Circulation) figures were revealed this August for all magazines across the UK, including, of course, all computer and videogames magazines. These figures backed up the long-held belief that interest in the console industry is on the increase, with most magazines — especially those in the PlayStation sector — recording high percentage increases in circulation. This was made even more significant as the rises were seen on issues sold over the traditionally quiet post-Christmas months.

Leading the way was the *Official UK PlayStation Magazine*, with a rise of 83.3 per cent over the last six months, to a massive 146,972. This makes the magazine the biggest games magazine ever, with revenue on the title surpassing all other previous computer games titles. The percentage increase in copy sales year on year for the last 12 months was a staggering 185.7 per cent, making the title also the fastest growing consumer magazine in the whole of the UK — an even greater percentage increase than *Loaded*, *FHM* et al.

PSM's sister magazines at Future Publishing also recorded superb sales, with *PlayStation Power* proving to be the fastest-

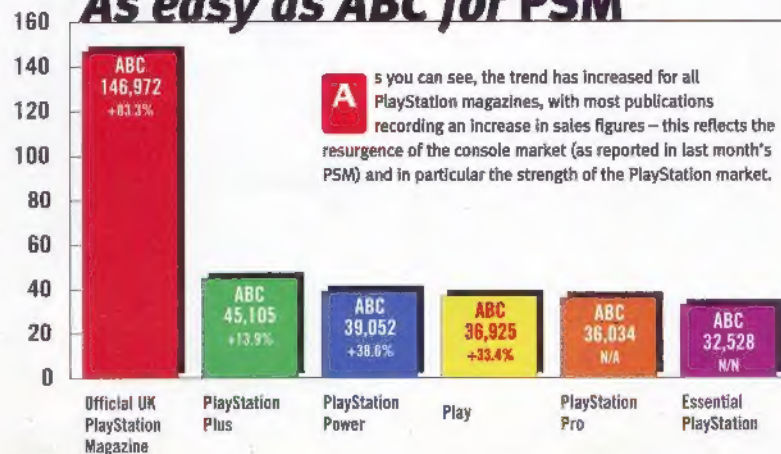
growing independent PlayStation magazine — it was up by an impressive 38.6 per cent for the six-month period and is rapidly becoming the second biggest-selling PlayStation magazine in the market. *Essential PlayStation*, recording its first ABC figure, weighed in with sales of over 30,000, a remarkable figure for a magazine without a regular monthly distribution. Future's publishing director, Jane Ingham, commented: 'The PlayStation market is obviously hot, but this is a very sexy magazine and it's selling shed-loads more than anything else in the market'.

Sales figures of 200,000-plus would seem the next milestone for the *Official UK PlayStation Magazine* as the industry continues to thrive.

PSM's biggest ever games title and UK's fastest-growing consumer magazine.



As easy as ABC for PSM



Impressive sales figures were also recorded by *PSM*'s sister publications, *Essential PlayStation* and *PlayStation Power*.

With ECTS well within touching distance, already rumours are circulating with regard to what games will be on show, what products will be the major surprises, and, more importantly, who will be doing the entertaining at the many industry parties. Ludicrous story of the month goes to the idea that Blur will be playing at the Eidos party on September 8. PSM's more experienced members looked on with a mixture of cynicism and incredulity as our gullible staff writer emerged from an excited telephone conversation and eagerly conveyed the shock story. Within minutes a couple of calls had crushed these ludicrous ideas, but not before Guy Pearce at Sony had promised that 'The Doors will be reforming to support Elais's comeback at the Sony party'. As anyone in the industry will admit secretly, ECTS is a somewhat stale arena, in terms of what decent journalists can pick up for their magazines. Any reasonable magazines will have covered most of the material on display already and the only real benefit to be gained is in finding out a general reaction of the public and retail trade to the software on display, and seeing whether this reaction coincides with the importance magazine staff have been placing on the titles. This shouldn't stop many magazines running to-page features on the 'Biggest Games Show Ever etc' over the next month. As for PSM, we'll see you at the bar...

Also worth mentioning, this month, is the build up to the Christmas Number One that is starting to gain pace. No doubt *Tomb Raider 2* will hit the top and stay there (be sure to see the review first in this magazine), but the battle for second place is already in full swing. In our opinion, the pack will follow like this: *FFVII* (potentially), *F1 '97* (probably), *FIFA '98* (inevitably) and then one from *Crash 2*, *Colony Wars*, *G-Police* and *Rapid Racer*. Place your bets now...

The cult of Lara

Lara Croft spreads everywhere

Ms Croft has been getting about this month, appearing on spreads in *The Sun*, *Esquire* and even on the cover of *The Face*. That's not to mention the 101 videogames magazines that have been running the lovely Lara on their covers, simply on the basis that they have six or seven secondhand screenshots for you to enjoy. Again. Rest assured, *PSM* will not feature Lara on its cover until the exclusive review has been safely put to bed. In the meantime, however, interesting developments have been taking place in the 'real' world of Lara...

It appears that the 'real' Lara, Rhone Mitra, star of our *PSM22* Work, Rest, and PlayStation page, has had some silicon enhancement of her own. The 21-year-old brunette, who appeared topless as a schoolgirl in the ITV series *The Man Who Made Husbands Jealous*, has had her two biggest assets enlarged to a Lara-sized 34DD. And it appears that the operation to pump up the previously 34A-sized bust was performed by her dad. Top plastic surgeon Dr Anthony Mitra looks like he made a good job of it, as well, if the features in *Esquire* and *The Face* are anything to go by.

All of this coverage is, of course, great exposure for the Lara Croft-lead *Tomb Raider 2*, but in some cases perhaps more exposure of Lara than Eidos had planned on.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONATHAN ELYN-SMITH

GAME GIRL

Presumably she'll be packing a seriously padded bra to public appearances. 'No I won't,' she says, adding that she doesn't need to. 'Which will please people, I'm sure'

PLASTIC SURGEON DAD DID STAR'S BOOB JOB

Father knows breast as doc boosts Rhona's assets to 34DD

1, 2) PlayStation's cult icon, Lara Croft, has enjoyed widespread publicity this month, 3, 4) bringing maximum exposure to her real-life counterpart, model Rhone Mitra.

The *Lost* picture show

EA's pod philosophy goes to the cinema

Electronic Arts are to promote *Lost World* on the PlayStation in Virgin Cinemas across the country, by installing copies of the game on Sony PlayStation demo pods in some 25 locations.

Fully playable versions of the games will be running in the Virgin Cinemas, together with other merchandising for the game developed by DreamWorks Interactive (reviewed on page 123 of this issue). This is an innovative step in promoting a PlayStation game and it will be interesting to see if other companies follow suit, as the PlayStation games market becomes ever more crowded. The new rental

arrangements for games will offer hope to many games which would perhaps be left behind in the clamour for retail supremacy, but this is yet another new move in terms of giving a game a high profile.

Lost World will also have much advertising in the media and will be involved in many different competitions before its release at the end of September. EA are really pulling out all the stops to make sure that the game sells well. The only real stumbling block, however, may be that the game isn't actually very good when you do get to play it. But more of that later in the issue...



Sony and the Official UK PlayStation Magazine went on tour at the end of August, and the success of the venture may pave the way for similar future events to take place. Kicking off on Sunday August 17 at the Birmingham International Convention Centre, the show moved on to Manchester and Newcastle before finishing up in Glasgow on Thursday August 21. Over 70 titles were on display with products being provided by SCE, Psygnosis, Virgin, Konami, Activision, Eidos, Ocean, BMG, Gremlin and Mindscape. There was also a major presence from Sony's Net Yarns system, retail distributor CentreSoft and representatives of PSM.

With over 3000 retailers attending, it was Sony's biggest roadshow to date, and in many ways a travelling ECTS (European Computer Trade Show), in advance of the real show this month. With the success of this excursion, it will be interesting to see whether other roadshows take place in which consumers will be allowed to get on the bus.



(1) PlayStation demo pods like this will be in Virgin Cinemas across the country, allowing *Lost World* to be played by potential customers. (2, 3) *Lost World*, based on the Spielberg film of the same name, is platform-based with a pseudo-3D effect. Turn to page 123 for a complete review of the game.

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The land of hope and glory

Controversy in the House of Commons, The European Computer Trade Show and a whacky golf game from Sony – it's all happening in the UK

Dundee: If you're a regular Radio 1 listener, you'll have heard all the fuss DMA's latest game *Grand Theft Auto* has caused, with one MP going as far as wasting house time questioning the morals behind GTA in the House of Commons. When we first heard the plot of the game (essentially driving around American cities stealing cars and shooting people) we thought there could be some sensationalism but didn't expect anyone would go as far as this. When we put this to publisher's BMG Interactive's press and PR manager Gavin White, he would only say: 'No comment.'



Leamington Spa: We do like tennis games here at PSM but they tend to be very samey, so we were intrigued when we heard about *Tennis Arena* from Smart Dog. Published by Ubisoft, the developers have gone for what's been described as a 'Street Fighter' take on the sport. If this is proving a little difficult to get your head around, let us explain. Rather than opting for normal tennis players *Tennis Arena* will introduce characters in a similar style to Namco's *Smash Court Tennis*. Among the characters will be a sumo wrestler, some rather spicy girls and a huge basketball player. The arcade-type action will be multiplayer with the games taking place in some very un-tennis like places such as a Roman Arena and an Egyptian Pyramid. We'll be popping round to their offices this month to find out more about this interesting title.



Middlesex: We received some bad news, recently, regarding the state of the Bruce Willis action game, *Apocalypse*. Due to problems with the code, the producers have taken the decision to delay the release until early in the new year. We questioned Activision's UK PR manager, Ben Le Rougetel, about the slip: 'Apocalypse is one of our biggest titles. The main thing about the game is the way your character interacts with Bruce's character – if this doesn't work perfectly then there's no point releasing it at all'. Just when it was looking promising, as well.



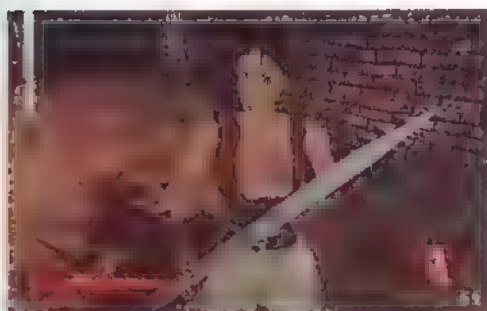
London: Sony UK have just announced plans to release an English version of their marvellous Japanese golf game, *Everybody's Golf*. Rather than take the serious approach of games like *Actua Golf 2* or *PGA Tour '97*, *Everybody's Golf* is a much more comical look at the sport – if you think of a golf version of Namco's *Smash Court Tennis* you won't go far wrong. You can choose from 10 different cartoon-like characters and four different courses – there's even a very hard crazy golf course for you to practise your putting skills on. We'll have more details after ECTS.



London: The beginning of September will see the biggest trade show in Europe. Known in the business as ECTS, the European Computer Trade Show will be held at Olympia conference centre from September 7–9. Consumers can purchase tickets, but most of the games on display will be titles that most games journalists worth their salt will have already covered. As ever, the biggest stand at the event will be taken by Sony. Oh, and look out for the PSM team loitering around the bar, if you go.



Nightmare Creatures ups the PlayStation babe stakes, while the rest of the States gears up for the release of *Final Fantasy VII*...



Nadia, from *Nightmare Creatures*. More of a dream creature in our opinion.

She's sassy, sexy and she's about to kick your butt, etc, etc. The leading lady cliché is nothing new, but following the excess sex-cess of you know who, slim-hipped, buxom beauties are bountiful.

The latest dream contender comes from Activision, from the world of its *Nightmare Creatures*. Had a (why are these women never called Bertha or Hyacinth?) has recently been slimmed down by her lascivious creators in an attempt to give her even more appeal among us sniveling fops. But *Nightmare Creatures* is no *Tomb Raider* rip off, you need a cultural hook, think *Bushido Blade* whipped up with *Resident Evil*. There are two characters in this subterranean menagerie of monsters (male and female), both of whom move very quickly indeed. At first, the combat combos are a pain, but once learned, they have the same endearing familiarities as a string of *Tekken* moves.

Although exploration is limited, there are weapons to be found, such as explosives and firearms. Monsters, zombies and imps are of the usual variety, but they can be scary. The most fun is the ability to carve out the extremities, thus impairing their capacity to crack your head open. Anyone for a leg of

walking dead? PlayStation watchers in the US are already predicting great things for *Nightmare Creatures*, which features 18 levels, making it a hunka-hunka game.

PC success has found the terrain tough on consoles when it comes to real time strategy games. But Westwood are charging ahead with *Red Alert*, the sequel to *Command & Conquer*. Thankfully, the game now offers mouse support.

Other improvements include a skirmish mode, which lets you indulge in death-matches against three other AI players. Many players tire of working their way through missions, and this is splendid relief. Westwood are still rubbing the rinds over Link up. While it seems like a great idea, games which have offered link-up before reported weak take up. Even so, PlayStation numbers were much smaller in the days of, say, the original *Wipeout*. *Red Alert* is scheduled to be released at the end of the year here in the US, so expect a UK launch early in '98. It'll feature the fully original *Red Alert* as well as 24 excellent skirmish maps.

As I write, the US is getting ready for the launch of *Final Fantasy VII*, which will be as great a test of this country's acceptance for Role Playing Games since *Mario RPG* on the SNES introduced the genre to a new generation. It's true that *Sukoden* and *Wild Arms* have won adherents here, but this is on an altogether grander scale. Sony have another RPG in Japan, called *Alundra*. It's an action-based title which has been billed as a

'Zeida-k-lier'. Sony, probably for much the same reason they have decided not to go ahead with Square's *Tobal 2*, won't bring the game over. But they have done the decent thing and handed English language rights over to Working Designs, who are best known for translating RPGs for the benefit of Saturn owners. *Alundra* features over 7,000 gorgeous screens, with 800 sound effects and 35 pieces of music. Battle sequences appear on screen in real time. Working Designs say they were attracted to the game because of its complex AI, from the lowliest enemy right up to the spectacular screen-filling bosses. Does this mean more a allegedly marginal Japanese game will be translated? Can it mean a reprieve for *Tobal 2*? Fingers crossed here in the States.



Westwood are to follow up the success of their PlayStation *Command & Conquer* with *Red Alert*.



(1) The US is gearing up for the release of *Final Fantasy VII* which will be a great test of the country's RPG acceptance. (2) *Alundra* will follow in its wake.



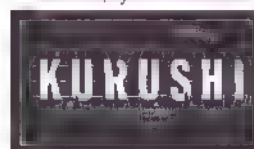
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Warm up your brain for



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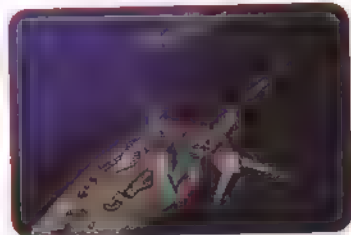
Canada: There comes a time when an e-mail questionnaire just won't do and you have to meet the developers face to face. Well, that was our excuse when we were given the chance to visit EA Sports' office in Vancouver to check on the progress of the '98 versions of *FIFA*, *NHL* and *NBA*. We'll be getting the chance to quiz the producers of all these games and get an early look at what could well be some of the top games this Christmas.



EA
SPORTS



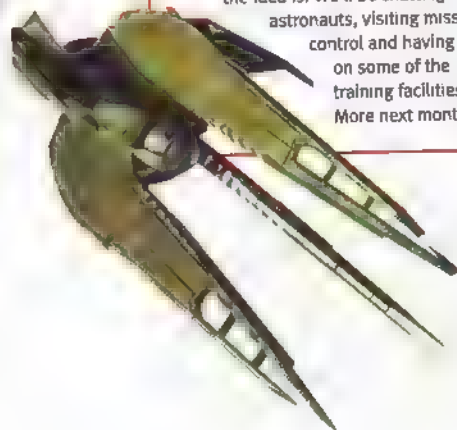
Argentina: In the course of our work we often get the chance to go abroad to visit companies and development teams. Most of the time we visit the States, with New York and California our preferred choices, but very occasionally we get unusual offers like Australia or Tokyo. Both of these were eclipsed, however, when Gremlin invited us to Argentina to watch Maradona's Boca Juniors take on River Plate to promote *Actua Soccer 2*. PSM will take part in a match against Argentinian journalists and then experience a football atmosphere unsurpassed anywhere in the world. But it'll all be work, work, work.



Houston: In Psygnosis' monster space blaster *Colony Wars*, the Earth has been stripped, forcing people to colonise nearby planets. When these planets try and assert their freedom, the Earth Navy is deployed to stop any revolts and the colony wars begin. Purely with our readers in mind, we'll be jetting off to Houston this month to visit the home of the American space agency NASA and find out how likely the idea is. We'll be chatting with astronauts, visiting mission control and having a go on some of the training facilities. More next month.

The World of PlayStation

Horse racing in Japan, football in Argentina and trips to Houston. You don't have to be a rocket-scientist to guess it's the world news...

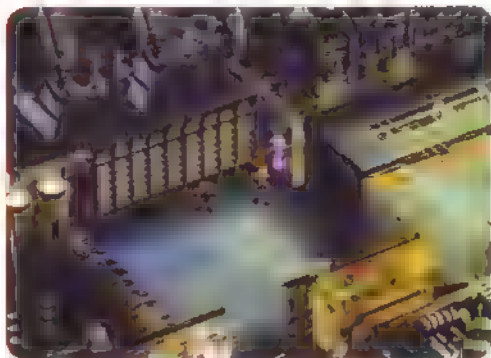


FOREIGN COVERAGE

Japan: Hudsonsoft, makers of the classic *Bomberman* series, have finally given up the ghost of platforms like the NEC and Sega and have announced plans to release their first PlayStation game. Based on the hit Japanese arcade game *Bloody Roar: Hyper Beast Duel*, it uses both human and animal characters in a 3D battle for supremacy. We'll give you further details as soon as we get them.

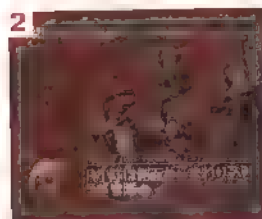


Japan: We all know how much the Japanese like their games – you just have to read the statistics for the sales of *Final Fantasy VII* (three million and counting). But even hardened industry insiders were astonished by the success of the latest horse racing (yes, horse racing) game. On the day before *Derby Stallion* was released, the pre-orders were far more than the pre-orders for *FFVII*, with 1.2 million people making sure they were able to take a copy home. For those unlucky few (thousand) who were unable to get a copy during the day, stalls were set up at railway stations, allowing that last-minute purchase. All this for a game in which all you do is bet on a horse again and again...

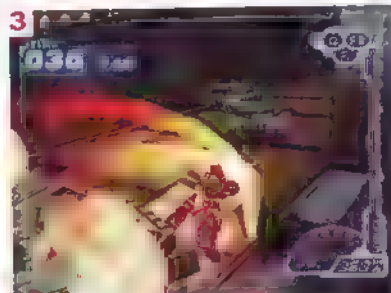
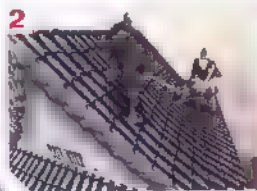


JAPAN COLUMN

Robot action games, a host of RPGs and an interesting fighting game in which strategy wins out over strength every time...



[1, 2] *Front Mission Alternative* is an improved version of the original RPG. [3, 4] *Escaper* is a fast-moving, action-orientated adventure full of gameplay choices.



[1, 2] *Tenchu* is an action/fighting game in which you play a ninja, but strategy rather than combat is the game's main objective. [3, 4] Pilot a metamorphosing robot in the 3D action game, *Gunbike: Speed Power Bike*.



After releasing the *Doom*-type *Killeak The Blood*, and a gorgeous CG adventure called *Kowloon The Gate* (a translation of which should arrive in Europe very soon), SCE have recently announced five new titles to be released for the remainder of the year. The new line-up will include four action games and one RPG.

Tenchu is an action/fighting game in which you take on the form of a ninja, playing as a male or female character. As in *Bushido Blade*, the action takes place in a Japanese-style castle among some gorgeous texture-mapped 3D backgrounds and players can fight anywhere in the castle. But *Tenchu* isn't a pure fighting game like *Bushido Blade* – in gameplay terms, it's more like Konam's *Metal Gear*. You must progress very carefully, watching your shadow and looking for

good places to hide. Once discovered you must of course defend yourself and fight, but strategy rather than combat is the main objective here.

Escaper is a fast action-oriented adventure featuring some 'super-hero' type characters. Moving freely through a 3D world, the player must discover and overcome obstacles to progress, using a variety of items he discovers along the way. Character animation is very smooth, although the backgrounds appear less sophisticated than in *Tenchu*. Players must solve mysteries in order to progress through the game, although the main character must of course also defeat a few annoying enemies. Time also seems to be an important factor, as players are reminded by a clock which is displayed on-screen.

Ever since the popular *Gundam* TV series, robot games have been a particular favourite with the Japanese. But whereas in the days of 16-bit, robots were blocky and character animation not so fluid, with the arrival of the 32-bit this genre seems to have developed and plenty of robot-action titles are hitting the market. *Gunbike: Speed Power Bike* is one such title and promises to offer some interesting features. In *Gunbike* the player pilots a robot that is able to mutate into different forms – such as a motor-bike – at various points in the game. But in order to metamorphose the player has to reach maximum speed, then decide the most appropriate shape according to the situation and its objectives. The game contains highly

detailed 3D texture-mapped backgrounds and there are all kinds of special weapons effects, lending the action an animation movie feel.

Ragnacouer is a classic RPG in which the player must prove his fighting prowess. The game uses a Memory card Battle System (MBS) which allows players to save their character's data, then use this to enjoy a special Battle mode two-player game with a mate. The game offers three different maps as well as some 3D battles and it'll also be possible to use some magic powers.

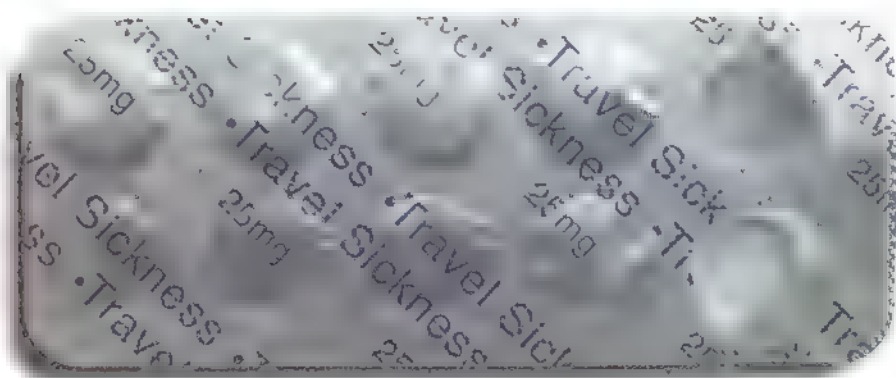
Taking a slightly more innovative approach, *Dam Dam Stampand* is based on the children's shadow game – where if you step on someone else's shadow, you lose. Exactly the same principle works here, with the main character, a prince called Dam-Dam, being the one who must avoid being caught. Despite its strange name, this title offers some original gameplay.

And finally, from Square comes *Front Mission Alternative*, *Front Mission* was an innovative simulation RPG that was released two years ago on other formats. This version takes place in the same world, but scenes are now, of course, made up of polygons and take place in real time. The fighting area is larger than in the original and the player must carefully weigh up all the areas before deciding a strategy. Extra features are available, such as troops being able to parachute, and there'll be numerous events contributing to the dramatic atmosphere of the game.



[1] *Ragnacouer* is a classic RPG in which the player must prove his fighting prowess. [2] *DamDam* is based on an old children's game.

SONY



MAYBE LUNCH WASN'T SUCH A GOOD IDEA.



**RAPID
RACER**

SOUNDTRACK BY APOLLO FOUR FORTY

THE ULTIMATE POWERBOAT RACE.

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Analogue control

Sony's pad gains success with gamers

Last month saw the surprisingly quick release of Sony's new analogue pad. After a few weeks on sale, the pad, which is

designed to give gamers an extra dimension of control, has been voted a great success across the country.

It is well documented that the Japanese version of the pad includes a very effective built-in rumble-pack, so when the UK version arrived minus the aforesaid we expected gamers to be a little miffed – yet another example of the JK gamer getting a raw deal. It seems we were wrong, as proved by the impressive sales figures being reported by everyone we questioned. The only exception came from companies that deal with imported software.

Geoff Knox, from 101 Computer Games, said he'd only sold one or two: 'Most people who buy stuff from us want the Japanese version with the built-in rumble pack – it feels like you're getting half a pad with the UK one'.

Speaking to Steve Sater, at Game in

Meadowhall, however, the story was somewhat different. 'The pad's sold really well initially there was a problem, with a lot of people buying it to play with V-Rally, but now we're asking people what they're going to use it with to avoid any confusion'. Mail order company Software First

reported a similar story when we spoke to their operations manager, Colin Childs: 'It's done reasonably well, even without us using a photo in our advert... but we expect it to do even better once we get a picture of the pad'.

As a nice bonus of the analogue pad's release at £24.99 is the reduction in price of the standard Sony pad at the new bargain price of £17.99.



Top 20

The Gallup top 20 of PlayStation games on sale now. With last month's placings in brackets.

- 1 [NE] V-Rally
- 2 [3] ISS Pro
- 3 [NE] Power Source
- 4 [35] Wrecking Ball
- 5 [NE] Rally Cross
- 6 [6] Tomb Raider
- 7 [4] Alien Trilogy
- 8 [9] Fists To Blotch
- 9 [10] Soul Blade
- 10 [8] Tekken
- 11 [12] FIA Formula One
- 12 [17] PGA Tour Golf '96

ChartTrack

OUT THIS MONTH

THE LATEST PLAYSTATION RELEASES

August

Having spoken to a few people in the trade, this month, there's one name which sums up PlayStation sales – V-Rally. Everyone is going absolutely mad for Ocean's superlatively real y sim. Speaking to Geoff Knox, at 101 Computer Games in Luton, he told us he was getting orders for the game daily. 'I can't get enough of them – I've got a list of people who've sent the money for the game but there's nothing you can do if you can't get the games from your distributors. I'd be selling six copies a day if I could get hold of them'. Other games currently selling well include Rage Racer and Soul Blade. Looking at the games released this month, they include the bargain of the month Transport Tycoon (we know we mentioned it last issue but it really is a bargain). Forty five pounds of your money will get you the game, a mouse and a mouse mat. Not bad at all. Geoff continued: 'The game which everyone seems to want at the moment is Actua Golf 2, I've had a lot of people calling about and with quite a few

ordering it for a golf game it looks like being huge'. Who said the PlayStation was all about beat 'em ups and driving games?

ON SALE NOW!

Information supplied by 101 Computer Games, Luton

PaRappa the Rapper	SCEE	PSM23	8.10
Monster Trucks	Psygnosis	PSM.7	7/10
Tiger Shark	GT Interactive	PSM22	4.10
Xenious 3D/G+	SCEE	PSM23	6.10
War Gods	GT Interactive	PSM22	3.10
Transport Tycoon	Ocean	PSM20	6/10
Explosive Racing	JM Interactive	PSM24	6.10
Actua Golf 2	Grem In	PSM22	7/10
All Star Soccer	Edos Interactive	PSM23	6.10
Dynasty Warriors	Ocean	PSM24	8.10

PlayStation Magazine RECOMMENDS



PaRappa the Rapper

A game unlike any other. As PaRappa you must work your way through six levels, performing in all sorts of tasks from learning martial arts, to appearing on a TV cooking show to learn how to bake a birthday cake for the love of your life, Sunny Funny. Strangest game of the year.



Actua Golf 2

Okay, so it's golf but if you can't be bothered to actually visit your local links and spot a good walk you could do a lot worse than try this digital version. With six courses (three real, three imaginary) and a top commentary from Peter Alliss and Alex Hay, Actua Golf 2 is great fun.



V-Rally

Yeah, so we recommended this last month but we thought, that since it's still number one in the charts we'd mention it this month as well. Forty five tracks, 11 cars and no end of secrets will keep you at the wheels of this marvellous game for an age.



Power Source

Here at PSM we like to do everything we can for charity so when we saw the Prince's Trust charity CD, Power Source, had entered the charts at number three, we had a warm glow in a heart. If you haven't had the chance to get hold of one, you're missing out on a bargain.

FIGHTING FORCE



BE PREPARED... WE'RE ON OUR WAY!



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EIDOS

Return of the Blazing Paddles

Win pads and memory cards

Hot on the heels of our incredibly popular Blazing Paddles competition in issue 18 comes another giveaway from those digital direction demons of Doncaster, Fire International. Since we last got together with them, they have developed some even stranger designs. Readers last month will have seen the camouflaged Hyper Combat pad and their Driving Pad but we've since taken delivery of the Hyper Fighter pad (a lovely blood splattered bone design) and a glow-in-the-dark Hyper Extreme pad, perfect for those under-the-bedcovers gaming. Included in the same parcel was their new budget pack of a Blaze pad and a one meg memory card.

If you'd like to win one of 10 Blaze competition packs (1 hyper duo pad and one pad from the Hyper series) then get on your thinking caps. In keeping with our competition last time, the Fire team have asked you to write in with your favourite joke, along with the answers to these very simple questions:

- 1) How many special pads do Blaze now produce?
- 2) Name two Hollywood films about firemen
- 3) How many boxers does it take to change a lightbulb?
- 4) Tell us your favourite joke.

Entries should be sent to 'Return of the Blazing Paddles' comp, PSM, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

Oh and don't forget to mention which hyper pad you want – the Combat, Fighter or the Extreme. Entries received after October 3 will be heartlessly laughed at. Oh, and Rob's decision is final.



They're back. That technicolour range of memory cards and controllers which are highly sought after in the PSM office. And you can win some for your own personal use. Read on...

Size really does matter

Flat screen technology from Fujitsu

If you're one of the very few PlayStation gamers for whom money is no object, then perhaps you might be interested in this impressive new TV from Fujitsu. Looking like something out of *Total Recall*, the Plasmavision 42 is the very latest in screen technology. Rather than try and increase the width of the screen, Fujitsu have worked on decreasing the depth. And boy, have they succeeded – measuring less than 6 inches, it's thinner than your PlayStation.

For the technically inept, Plasmavision is the latest display technology which allows manufacturers to use top-quality flat-screen TVs. The Plasmavision system creates an array of cells, known as pixels, which are composed of three sub-pixels corresponding to red, green and blue (RGB) on the screen. Gas, in plasma state, is then used to react to phosphors in each sub pixel to produce coloured light (red, green and blue) in the same way as a conventional cathode ray tube. To ensure the best picture quality each sub pixel is controlled by electronics producing full 16-bit colour.

Enough of the physics, we hear you cry, 'what about the price?' Well, like we said, you really do need to be loaded to get one of these wonders. Without VAT the price seems a most realistic (if you'd rather have a TV than a car, that is) but add VAT to the bill and it clocks a retail price close to £11,600, and you don't even get any speakers!

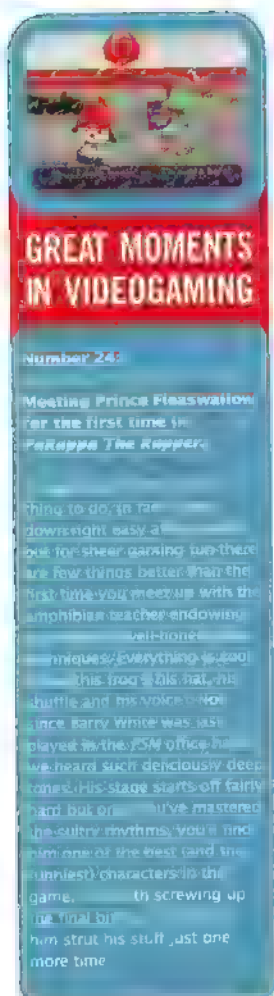
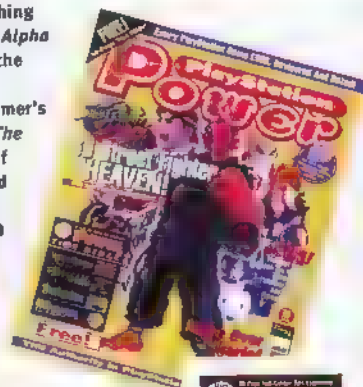


This month in Power

and Essential

Along with PlayStation Power's eye-catching *Street Fighter Ex Alpha Plus* cover come the usual top-notch reviews of some of the summer's best titles, from *PoRappa The Rapper* to *The Last World*. If this isn't enough, you could learn about some of this winter's top titles in the 3D platformers feature. Not to mention (but we do every month) a fantastic listings section detailing every game ever reviewed and a massive tips book guaranteed to get you out of all kinds of scrapes.

There was much celebrating this month, as we welcomed back *Essential PlayStation* after their re-launch which sports a very sexy new look and a fantastic cover disc featuring *Tomb Raider*, *Tekken 2*, *Crash Bandicoot*, *Command & Conquer*. Along with this bargain is a huge guide to every football game available, the final word on whether *Soul Blade* is better than *Tekken 2*, and brand new sections devoted to racing, fighting and sports games. If you've not bought these magazines yet, make a visit to your local newsagent now. They're worth the trip.



FIRESTORM THUNDERHAWK 2

"A LEGEND SET TO BECOME A PHENOMENON IF THERE IS A GAMES GOD"
MEAN MACHINES 1995-95



THERE IS MOST DEFINITELY A GAMES GOD
FIRESTORM THUNDERHAWK 2 JOINS THE PRESTIGIOUS RANKS OF THE PLAYSTATION PLATINUM COLLECTION



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PlayStation™

READERS' LIVES

Let your fingers do the fighting

Namco open massive arcade in London

When it comes to arcade games there are very few companies who can beat the track record of Namco who have brought us such classics as *Tekken 3* and *Aqua Jet*. Until very recently their presence in the UK was limited to two or three Namco Wonderparks, but this is all set to change with the opening of their new 'interactive entertainment centre' – the Namco Station. Set deep in the heart of one of London's biggest buildings, County Hall, not only will the centre be a mecca for gameheads wanting the very latest arcade games, it'll also be source of entertainment for the whole family.

You'll be able to play pool in the American pool saloon, ride the turbo bumper cars, or take a break from beating the crap out of (digital) mates and relax over a beer in the bar. Unlike certain other branded arcades, entry to Namco Station is free with the prices of the games kept as low as possible, so fighting

Namco have made their name as purveyors of top-quality arcade games, notably *Tekken 3* released this year. Now, for the first time, all their machines are available under one roof at the Namco Station in London's County Hall.



games should be around 50p with driving games set around £1. Namco aren't too sure how many games will be on offer as they are adding more and more games by the day, but expect plenty of top-quality games like *Tekken 3* and *Rave Racer*.

Excluding any technical hitches, Namco Station will open for business in the second week of September. If you want to see *PSM* there, will be the ones dribbling next to the *Tekken 3* cabinet waiting for turn to get a bit handy.



We were sorting through the post, the other week, when we stumbled across a little parcel from the Japanese Keychain company in Doncaster. When we opened the package, out fell all sorts of little electronic games based on Steven Spielberg's latest digital dinosaur flick, *The Lost World*. After we'd handed a few around the office we still had 10 left, so we thought we'd give the extra key chains to the first 10 readers who write in telling us the breed of the dinosaur that rampages through San Diego at the end of the film. Send your entries to: 'I want a Doncaster Dinosaur', *PSM*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. And remember, the first 10 win, so there's no point sending in your entry two weeks after you bought the mag – get 'em in now.



Okay, so maybe you won't come up with *Tomb Raider* or *Tekken* the first time round...

Design for life (2)

Win more fame and fortune

We often receive letters asking us how to get your game ideas published, so we thought we'd use this as an opportunity to remind you about the Prince's Trust design-a-game competition taken from the excellent *Power Source* compilation. If you want a chance of winning £2,500 towards publishing your game, all you have to do is write, in no more than 100 words, your idea for a top game (you can also include drawings of your idea on one sheet of A4).

Prizes for the two winners will include a meeting with the Prince's Trust advisors to discuss the business potential of your game and a more-than-generous £2,500 grant to help you get the game published. Other prizes include up to £750 worth of Sony hi fi, a year's subscription to *PSM* and a copy of every game published by Sony during the year. Anyone wanting further information should write to Prince's Trust Trading Ltd, 19 Park Square East, London NW1 4LH quoting ref. CADEPT. Alternatively, you could write to Sony Computer Entertainment, 13 Great Marlborough Street, London W1V 2LP, ref. PTCOMP. Requests for the competition rules should be sent by October 30. Surely this and the ELSPA competition should get your creative juices flowing. We'll keep you informed of how the competition is going. Once again, good luck!



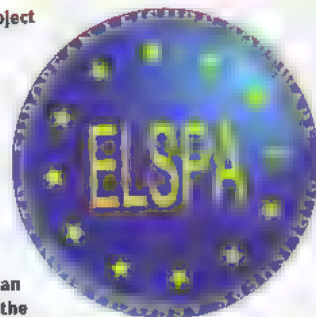
Design for life

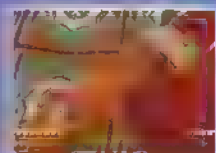
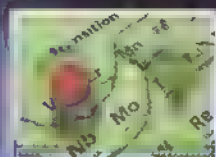
Your chance to win a Yaroze

While we're on the subject of games design competitions, we thought we ought to remind you of the ELSPA Game Designer of the Year compo. The competition has been set up by the industry regulators to uncover the next generation of games designers. As if you needed any extra incentive than the title of Game Designer of the Year, the winners will each receive a Yaroze, with the overall winner collecting a cheque for £5,000 at a top industry dinner.

The competition is split into three categories. The first is a 3D animation sequence – this can be on any subject with or without sound and no bigger than 2Mg. The next category is for demos or animated story boards. Entries should consist of game story lines, animated story sequences and a written brief including story-line, concepts and gameplay ideas. Limit these to 5Mg. The last category is for a full game. Limited to 10Mg, the game should include documentation and will be judged on programming ability, creativity and game design.

Entries can be on any system and can be submitted by anyone except those who've had work published professionally or as shareware and haven't worked in the leisure software industry for five years. If this little lot hasn't put you off, send your entries to the following address: Consumer Game Designer of the Year, ELSPA, Suite 1, Haddonsacre, Station Road, Offenham, Near Evesham, Worcestershire, WR11 5LW. Good luck! Hopefully you'll be a few quid better off as a result of your efforts and we'll be reviewing your PlayStation game this time next year.





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up to 16 players racing against each other ★ 16 different cars ★ 16 is the
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No 1

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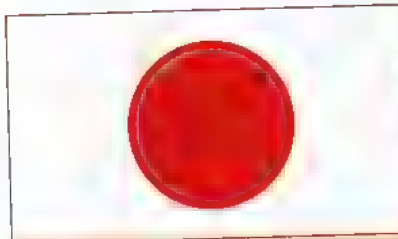
Mental Kombat

We predict...

That next month's top 30 selling games will look like this. What do you reckon? If you can get any closer to the final 10 than this, with your guess, then we'll send you whichever game is at number one. Answers on a postcard to the usual address, labelled 'Top 10'.

1. (1) *V-Rally*
Ubisoft
2. (2) *ISS Pro*
Ubisoft
3. (3) *Prince's Trust*
SCIE
4. (NE) *Active Golf 2*
Ubisoft
5. (NE) *Monster Trucks*
Ubisoft
6. (6) *Tomb Raider*
Core Design & Eidos
7. (5) *Rally Cross*
Ubisoft
8. (NE) *Active Soccer*
Ubisoft
9. (NE) *PaRappa The Rapper*
Ubisoft
10. (NE) *Leader*
Ubisoft

East meets West, this month, as PSM's two correspondents cross time zones and cultural divides to do *Mental Kombat*. They maintain their anonymity, however, so that their cover isn't blown, their clandestine reportage is not jeopardised... and, no doubt, to continue avoiding the Taxman.



Name: Japanese Correspondent Age: 27 Job: PSM Japanese Correspondent Favourite games: *PaRappa The Rapper* is a recent favourite, but fighting games are the staple diet of our man in Tokyo. But is he ready for a tussle with our surrogate Yank?



Name: US Correspondent Age: 29 Job: US Correspondent Favourite games: Our all-American boy (who's actually from Manchester) has become something of a sports fan. Basketball, baseball - how will he do at fielding our questions?

QUESTIONS

JAPANESE CORRESPONDENT

US CORRESPONDENT

1. Name three characters from *PaRappa The Rapper*

Sunny Funny, Mooselini and the Onion Master
3/3

Sunny Funny, Onion Master
2/3

2. Who developed *Ray Storm*?

Taito
1/1

Sony Japan
0/1

3. Name two of the games on *Namco Museum Volume Four*

Pac-World
1/2

Assault and The Return Of Ishtar
2/2

4. Who are publishing *Jersey Devil*?

Don't know
0/1

No idea
0/1

5. What is the latest *Strike* game called?

Nuclear
1/1

Nuclear
1/1

6. How is *Kurushi* known in Japan?

IQ
1/1

Pass...
0/1

7. How is *Air Race* known in the US?

Reciproheat 5000
1/1

Reciproheat 5000
1/1

8. Who are to publish *Judge Dredd* in the UK?

Don't know
0/1

Gremlin
1/1

9. What have *Theme Park* and *Syndicate Wars* got in common?

Both great games?
0/1

Both from Peter Molyneux
1/1

10. Which is best, New York or Tokyo?

Tokyo
1/1

New York
1/1

VERDICT

9 - Good show from our man in the land of the rising sun.

9 - Again, some tough Anglo questions but the boy from the States done good.

QuizStation



Here in the United Kingdom, we may not have sushi, and saki, or Budweiser and pretzels (although most foreign food products are widely available at Waitrose or Sainsbury), but we can feast on an excellent diet of PlayStation games and magazines. So in the Best of British spirit, here is a sporting chance for the local underdog to make good. Answer the questions and win some prizes...

Answers on a POSTCARD to:
QuizStation 24, Official UK PlayStation Magazine,
30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Entries to us by October 3

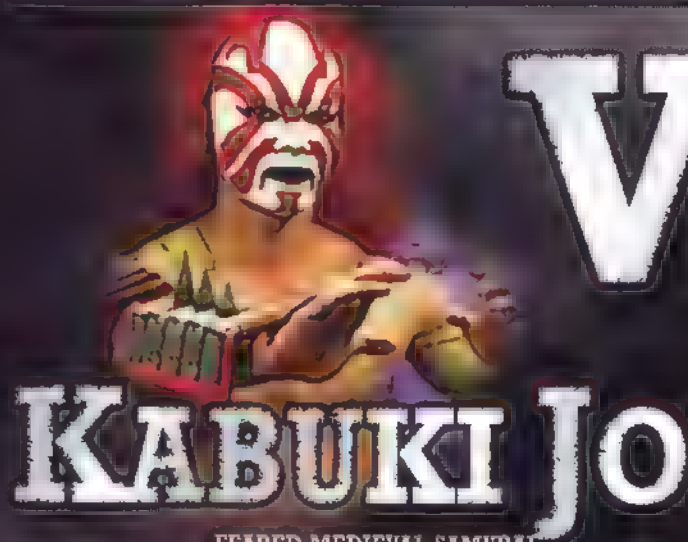
The questions

- 1) What is the capital of Japan?
- 2) What is the tallest building in New York?
- 3) What is the currency of Japan?
- 4) Is sushi nice?
- 5) Which street is directly South of 21st Street?
- 6) Broadway and 7th Avenue meet at what Square?

Answers to Mental Kombat
1) Sunny Funny, Mooselini, Onion Master
2) Taito
3) Pac-World, The Return of Ishtar, Assault, Ordine
4) Gremlin
5) Nuclear
6) Both from Peter Molyneux
7) Reciproheat 5000
8) Gremlin
9) Both great games?
10) New York

War Gods

P R E S E N T S
THE ULTIMATE 3D COMBAT

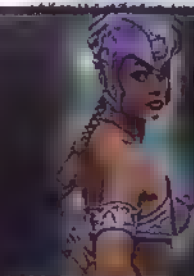


FEARED MEDIEVAL SAMURAI

Vs



AVENGER OF A LOST CIVILISATION



VALLAH

A VIKING GODDESS

WARHEAD

A SUPER-HUMAN FIGHTER

Vs



PAGAN

A MISTRESS OF THE BLACK ARTS

CY-5

AN ADVANCED CYBORG

Vs

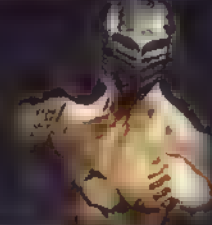


ANUBIS

HIS SOUL IS CURSED

AHAU KIN

AN EVIL HIGH PRIEST



MAXIMUS

A MIGHTY GLADIATOR

Vs

VOODOO

GOD OF THE ENDEAL



MIDWAY



he games industry is hard to get into. I started by going to art college, then took graphic design for a Multimedia degree.

'Multimedia' is a nasty word, so I tried looking for a job in games. As most vacancies seemed to be for 3D artists, I then took an MSc course in 3D Computer Graphics. This got me into programming, so I fled into a project placement with developers Bizarre Creations - I phoned them the day they started recruiting for *Formula 1*. Jammy, eh?

Everyone in this industry has their own ideas about hours and approach to working. I usually start at around 8-9am and leave around 6-7pm, but this varies depending on deadlines. As an artist I tend to suffer less from last-minute rushes than programmers, and often have to pick my way through sleeping bodies to get to my desk in the morning. If there's something important needed, such as a magazine cover, you can work most of the day and night to get it looking perfect.

Although the last two years have involved a range of work, from designing *F1* front-end graphics, through building circuits, to high-res marketing stuff, I'm now having a more



Mark Akester, graphic designer with the development team responsible for the *F1* games, Bizarre Creations.

Work, Rest, and PlayStation

relaxing time producing *F1 '97* images for magazines. At Bizarre Creations, we all work on a variety of software, both 2D (such as *Photoshop*) and 3D (such as *Softimage*), but I prefer to specialise in the 2D field, using 3D models as a basis.

So after the obligatory three cups of tea, I begin to work on the cover image for *Official UK PlayStation Magazine*. Having a cover is a real buzz for both the team and the artists who work on it. Firstly I set the scene up by loading in a real *F1* circuit onto the Silicon Graphics machine. While waiting, I get a chance to play the game, and

'If there's something important needed, such as a magazine cover, you can work most of the day and night to get it looking perfect'. Mark Akester takes you through a day in his life as Senior Graphic Designer at Bizarre Creations...

harass Dave about his Action AI - the conversation is mainly me telling him to make Schumacher the best!

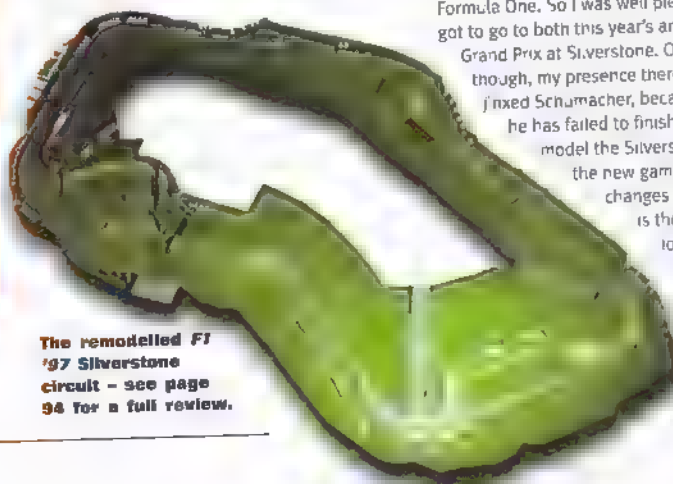
Even though I've been working on the games for over two years, now, I still love *Formula One*. So I was well pleased when we got to go to both this year's and last year's Grand Prix at Silverstone. On the downside, though, my presence there seems to have jinxed Schumacher, because both years he has failed to finish. I had to remodel the Silverstone circuit for the new game, as there were changes to be made - this is the model I'm loading in for the render. Two hours and another few cups of tea later, the scene is

loaded and I can start to set up the cars on the grid. It's a bit like being an *F1* photographer, but you get to line up your 'deal shot' by hand. When I'm happy I do a test preview, which takes a couple of hours to produce. The afternoon is then spent changing the set-up - and changing drinks to coffee - then going for the final render. This can take a few days to produce, unless I can prise Halp off the new Intergraph PC.

I know I'll have to spend many hours tweaking that final image in *Photoshop*, which will have to be done when the render's finished. So I have a couple more cups of coffee, make sure the SG hasn't crashed, and then call it quits for the day. I wander home and plug in the PlayStation to get down to the extremely important task of guiding the Raiders through another stressful game in this year's season. If you want an independent reviewer for *Madden '98*, by the way...

ON THE JOB

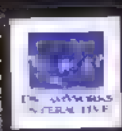
Mark Akester
Age: 24
Job: Senior graphic designer for a... and a half 3D artist.
...ies, thank...
... And those as well...
... Schumacher, games...
... *Star Wars*, *Star Wars* games...
... ileneuve (sorry...
... Cheryl); the fact that all *Star Wars* games come out on the...
... first, and I've only got...
... PlayStation at home.
Your boss: Chuo
You're the boss: Not quite...
... and a volunteer...



The remodelled *F1 '97* Silverstone circuit - see page 94 for a full review.

1997 *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 12(6):749-762

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With serrated teeth to slice through bone, of course you can.
Rip it up as the Tyrannosaurus Rex in the most intense
gaming experience in history.

CAN YOU SURVIVE?



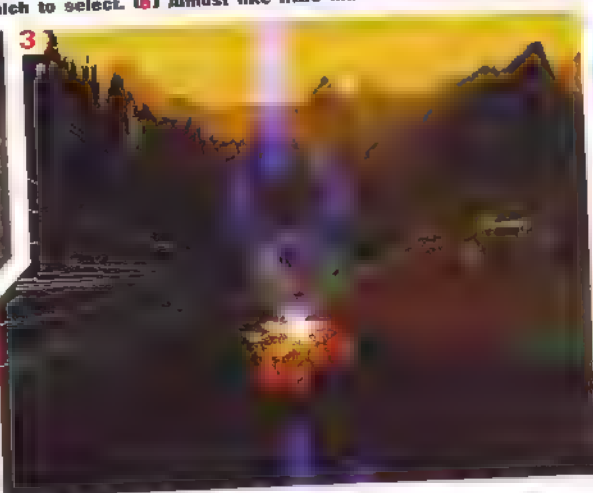
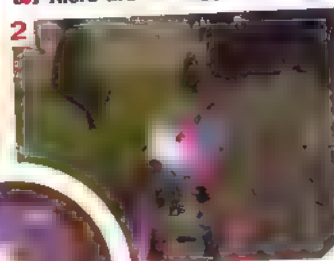
LOADING

43% COMPLETE

Prigmal

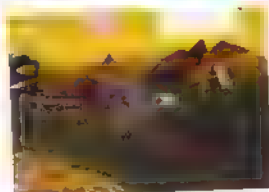
PSM go straight to the horse's mouth to bring you news of some of the major new PlayStation titles coming soon...

(1) And you find remote-controlled cars in the strangest of places. Here's one we found in the tomb of Tutankhamen. Not really. (2) Stars in their eyes. There's some camera going on there, eh? (3) An ill buggy, zapped from the heavens. Divine Intervention's always splendid. (4) There are 16 buggies from which to select. (5) Almost like little Mario's castle, innit?



Buggy

Give us that remote control



Check out the slalom gates. Go through them to score bonuses.

Style: Racing game
Publisher: Gremlin
Developer: In-house
Release date: November

Those of you who've bashed pad and wobbled stick for a number of years will be aware of Gremlin's Lotus racing games. The more recent gaming converts should remember last year's *Hardcore 4x4*. Next in line for the vehicular translation to console are remote-controlled buggies, little fellows with chunky tyres which bounce along

merrily. Gremlin's very own Mark Glossop wants to tell you more...

Describe your game in 100 words.
Buggy is a colourful and fun driving game with plenty of hidden surprises. The player takes control of one of 16 super compact buggies. Each one is radio-controlled and sports its own distinctive paint job and handling characteristics. They are raced across a variety of circuits, ranging from road tracks to sunny beach settings, and each has its own distinctive features and game furniture.

The game can also be played in two-player, split-screen mode for maximum head-to-head PlayStation fun

The tracks are littered with obstacles which can be avoided or jumped, the latter often propelling the buggies high into the air. While negotiating the track furniture the player must attempt to pass through as many of the slalom gates along the way as they possibly can. By completing various colour combinations of these the player is awarded bonuses, ranging from power-ups to secret tracks or vehicles. Players do not have to

complete gates, though performance will be reduced if this is the case

Is there anything in *Buggy* which we haven't seen in another game before?

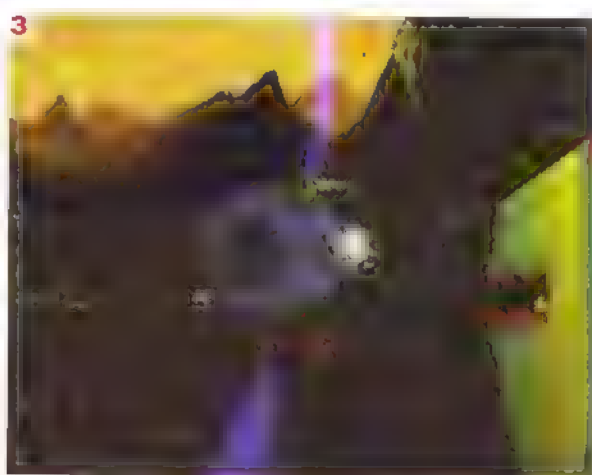
The vehicle morphs in response to certain power-ups. For example, the buggy's aerial will rotate in a helicopter rotor-blade motion and the wheels fold under the body when a hover power-up is acquired.

So what games have influenced the development of *Buggy*?
Buggy Boy (ye olde arcade

OK computer...



Buggy is blessed with a plethora of remote-controlled cars which all have their own custom paint jobs. The cars bounce along at a ridiculous rate – you can hurtle huge leaps and still keep control of the four-wheel-drive car. You can also grab the Mega Grip power-up which lets you steer a path up previously inaccessible sheer cliff faces. Check out some of the level titles...



1 There are power-ups which let you do some wild stuff. Like turn the buggy into a helicopter. **2** Gremlin have included a two-player, split-screen mode. **3** Be prepared for the cars to bounce. **4** Helicopter alert. **5** Look out for short-cuts.



Mario Kart (SNES)

Okay, what's going to be the best bit in the game?

- Going off a jump, flipping and landing cat-like on wheels before picking up a Mega Grip power-up and using it to climb a sheer cliff face to a previously inaccessible area

But why will Buggy be better than all the other racing games?

- The speed of going down long straightaways and around tight corners, a game of Buggy's intense driving. The tracks are such that winning a race want to replay it, just to see the secret areas, shortcuts

or bonus vehicles which will be tucked away in their deepest, darkest recesses

Any great techy bits or cool programming techniques?

The special effects associated with power-ups are simply stunning. Also the AI of the competing vehicles is extremely advanced. Not only do they make educated decisions about which route to take through a level, they also adjust their speed for corners and perform intelligent over-taking manoeuvres.

What have the guys 'n' gals on the team done before?

Our programming team have three years of PlayStation experience with titles such as

Loaded and Hardcore 4x4 behind them

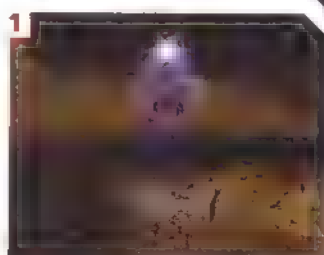
So why should anyone care about Buggy?

Because this is a unique driving game which was designed with rewarding gameplay in mind. There certainly aren't any other motor vehicle games like it. There are so many clones on the market we knew we could do something completely different and give gamers a new take on the racing genre. Hopefully, Buggy's intuitive handling and multi-player options will provide a new

dimension in racing games

Any secrets you can tell us?

Two of the Buggy track designers started life at Gremlin as Helpline operators (a very long time ago), it keeps them off the phone...



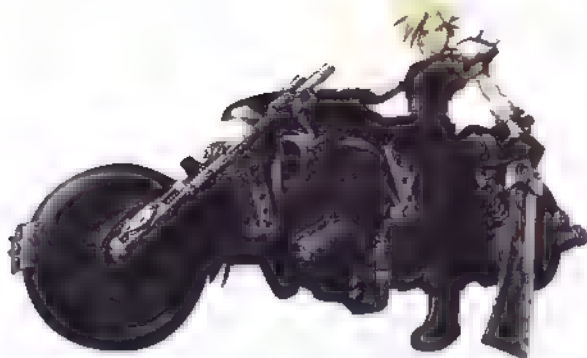
1 Always a pleasing addition in racing games is the split-screen, two-player option. **2** The handling of the cars is quite unlike anything else on the PlayStation.

(1) The Japanese will, of course, be translated for these shores. (2) *FFVII* blends real-time action with fantastic animated sequences. (3) It's the biggest PlayStation game in Japan. (4) Look to the stars. (5) The calm... (6) ...before the storm. (7) Trapped in the urban sprawl.



Final Fantasy VII

Be there and be Square



Style: Role playing game (RPG)

Publisher: SCEE

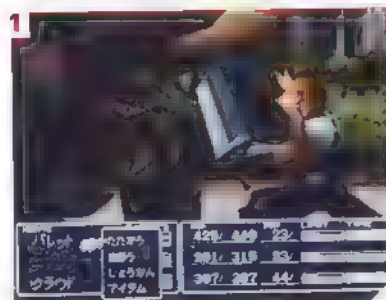
Developer: SquareSoft

Release date: November

In Japan, it's the biggest PlayStation game there's ever been. The waiting isn't over for UK owners, just yet, but this looks like being such a classic as to appease even those who wouldn't normally touch anything with a menu-driven combat system.

A few changes will be made to the translated *FFVII*: random monster encounters will be reduced, for instance, and a few of the difficult sub-plots have supposedly been altered to make them more acceptable to the American palate. The RPG purists are obviously outraged, and how much this will affect the overall appeal of the storyline remains to be seen, but it hasn't lessened the fervour of anticipation for Square's most ambitious game to date. We ask the questions...

Describe the game in 100 words
The latest in the *Final Fantasy* series is the closest Square have come to their ultimate goal of blending real-time action with FMV-quality animation, in an all-encompassing, totally absorbing and immersive interactive gaming experience. This seventh heaven is a mix of stunning backdrops, adorable and believable characters, intriguing plots,



(1) Those who have played the SNES versions will be familiar with the characters. (2) The defection by SquareSoft from Nintendo to the PlayStation was a coup for Sony.



Cloud's across the moon...



For many years, Cloud Strife (above left) has worked loyally for the massive Shinra Corporation. But when he discovers the true nature of Shinra – that they are draining away the world's soul, its life energy – Cloud escapes and turns mercenary. He is approached by the ecological terrorist group Avalanche and he agrees to help them destroy the Shinra organisation

pulsating battles and tricky puzzles, which all add up to the best RPG yet to appear.

What's the plot?

The world of *Final Fantasy VII* expands on *FFIII*'s concept of Magitek, where magical forces are a reality and have thus been incorporated into the technological progress of civilisation. This isn't your typical fantasy setting: vast chimneys belch smoke, steam trains criss-cross the urban sprawl, neon signs crackle in the rainswept streets between towering factories. It transpires that Mako is a 'dark form of magic, and its insidious corruption of the Shinra Corporation has created a police state by empowering a security force. You begin the game as an ex-soldier-turned-revolutionary, and immediately find yourself assisting the terrorist group called Avalanche in their attempt to overthrow Shinra and restore balance to the exploited world.

Is there anything in this game that we've never seen in any other?

If you've played SNES versions of the *Final Fantasy* series, then possibly not. There are slight deviations from the first six, and the music and graphics are obviously enhanced. But as a PlayStation starting point, continuity was very wise. For novice owners, however, this will be like nothing you've seen.

What other games have influenced *Final Fantasy VII*?

Final Fantasy, *Final Fantasy II*... need we go on? There is a whole history of RPGs and all the paths that lead Square here were winding. In *Final Fantasy VII*, however, there have been more Western influences both externally and from those on the team.

What's going to be the best bit of the game?

Taking an already believable story and gameplay and placing it in an



environment that now looks really is a real shock to the senses.

Why will it be better than any other game of its ilk?

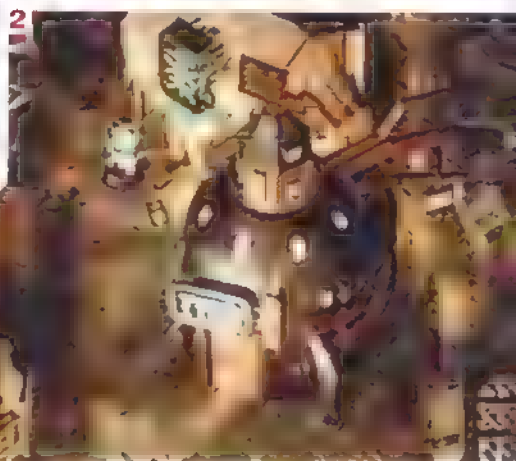
The characters, for a start. Square's scriptwriting talents are once again employed to make you fall in love with the characters, then mercilessly pull your emotional strings as they experience suffering, joy, love, betrayal and even (whisper) death. Also the quest is huge, straddling no less than 3 CDs, and with so many locations that the average completion time is reported to be 120 hours.

Any specific technical innovations to speak of?

At first the system might seem to bear similarities to *Resident Evil*. In that your polygon hero can move around a detailed pre-rendered environment, but the backgrounds are packed with interactive 'hot spots'. The integration of old and new techniques also gives *FFVII* a unique cinematic quality. Its many cut scenes are CG movie sequences that use the same pre-rendering as the rest of the game,

(1) For players unfamiliar with the style of gameplay, there will be tutorial lessons to get you started.

(2) The action is combined with CGI movie sequences.



so that when the dizzying camerawork finally comes to a halt, the scene on which it settles is also the environment in which your character can explore. The direction is seamless. The combat system boasts AD&D complexity. Weapons and items have slots in which to fit Materia, orbs that endow the wearer with extra powers such as the ability to steal, or summon Esper-like creature attacks, with some weapons boasting more slots for combining enhancements.

So why should anyone care about the game?

Because it's the best RPG to appear on the PlayStation. It's so different from others already in Japan!



(1) Romance, fantasy, magic, action and adventure are the ingredients which have made the FF series such a hit. (2) *FFVII* has a huge non-linear storyline which embraces a massive range of locations.



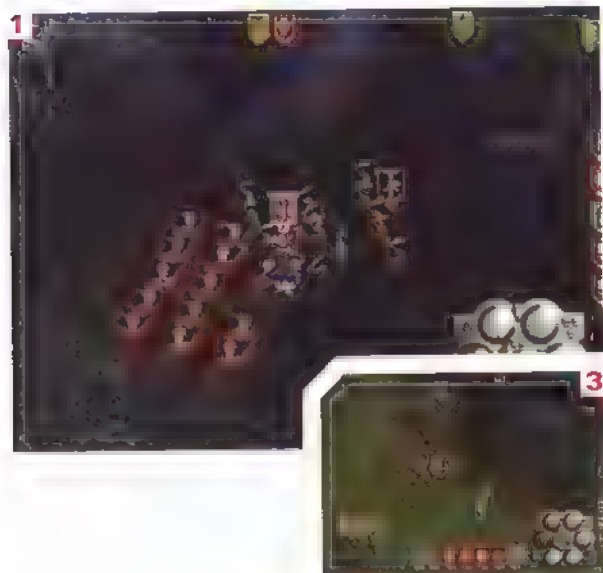
Not Final, exactly

From its humble beginnings on the NES, the *Final Fantasy* series has finally overtaken *Dragon Quest* as the most popular RPG series in Japan. Although *FFII* remains a favourite for many, it was the operatic plotting and melodrama of *FFIII* that really brought the series to the attention of the Western gaming fraternity. For many players, it was unlike anything they'd ever seen before. Indeed, some fans were so smitten that they 'reverse-engineered' the combat system and argued *FF* cosmology to create their own dice-&-paper RPG (interested netheads should check the newsgroup alt.games.final.fantasy.rpg). We should also warn you about the fan fiction, though – speculative stories of Shadow's early adventures, etc. – by devotees so reluctant to leave Square's world that an obsession with *Lord Of The Rings* looks positively healthy. Ick.

LOADING

55% COMPLETE

(1) Some heroic knights doing what they do best - riding regiments of goblins into the dirt. (2) Here they are again, heedlessly chargin' right into the thick of it. (3) As in *Shadow Of The Horned Rat*, magicians can turn the tide of a battle.



Dark Omen: Warhammer 2

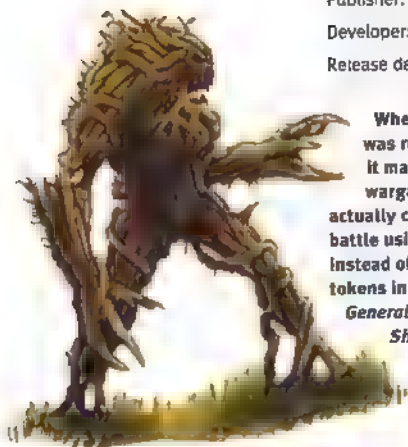
3D war in real time

Style: 3D real-time wargame

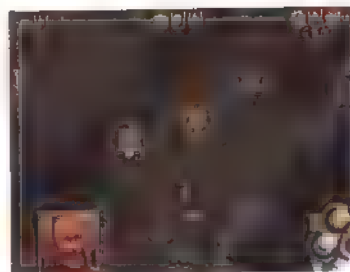
Publisher: Mindscape

Developer: In house

Release date: November

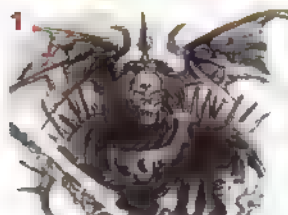


When the original game was released, late last year, it marked a huge change for wargames; gamers could actually command their armies in battle using full 3D graphics instead of shifting counters and tokens in 2D games like *Allied General*. After *Warhammer: Shadow Of The Horned Rat* received a deserved 8 out of 10 in issue 12, the game sold by the



bucketload to role-playing fans, looking for something worthy of a 32-bit machine. So as soon as PSM heard plans of a sequel, we got straight on the phone to Steve Leney, one of Mindscape's internal development team, to find out more about their latest tactical treat.

All of the graphics have been completely overhauled and redone for *Dark Omen: Warhammer 2*, allowing a much clearer view, even when zoomed right out.



(1) As you can see from these artist's sketches, there are some nasty critters for you to face. (2) In the first game, archers were a powerful tool - and that hasn't changed.



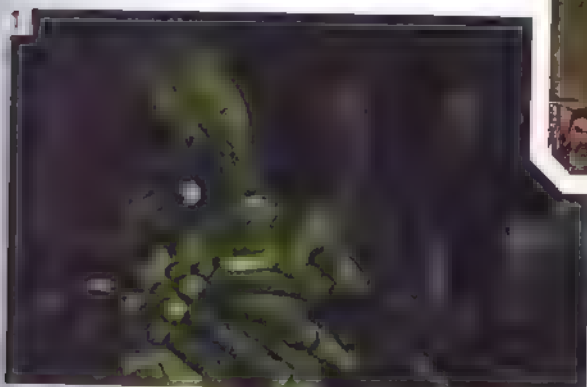
Describe *Dark Omen* in 100 words

As the Dread King stirs, you must lead your army in search of his terrifying forces. As you rush to destroy these enemies, you have to defeat undead and greenskin hordes before facing the Dread King himself, together with any of his agents who escaped your grasp... The game is set within a

true 3D environment in which you command regiments of cavalry, infantry and archers together with wizards, war machines and monsters. You can fight against sophisticated enemy armies or, in multi-player mode, against a friend in action-packed real-time battles, developing your army as you choose when, where and with whom to fight

Is there anything in the game that we've never seen in any other? Giant spiders, scorpions, tanks, skeletons and dwarfs, all scrapping it out together in a real-time, real 3D war. Heads exploding in a shower of blood - watch, as the very souls of your warriors are drained from their bodies. Burning troops, running screaming across the battlefield and collapsing in a

1 If you thought that the first game's cut-scenes were stunning, wait until you get a load of these new ones. **2** Your general still has his trusty magic sword, allowing you to throw fireballs about at will.



new being heap. Hordes of
... rising from the earth to
... the living.

3 Is a sequel? What can we
... from *Dark Omen* that we
... see in *Shadow*?

... loads of things in the
... that we wanted to
... shouldn't, so we made
... put them in the

... it be a multi-player
... you can choose
... dead, or or

... to scrap on any
... different

... you can build and
... own army to memory
... and to your

... and fight his
... you can decide to
... movements and

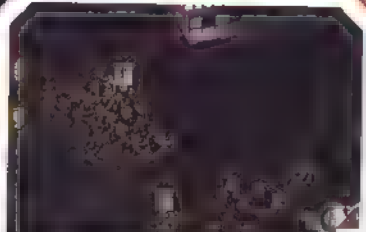
... weapons for your army
... want - you

... be linked up.
... segments to make
... kick-ass bunch

... the block
... your point

... oper 3D line of
... you can hide from
... behind hills and

... am with a full charge in
... they saunter past
... s to a hilltop and



1 Demoralised regiments still peg it when things go badly. **2** The new building graphics are lovingly detailed. **3** As you might have noticed, not all your opponents will actually be alive... **4** There's nothing like a good luck to sort the men out from the boys.



input offered from the gamers who bought it. We had a great deal of feedback from *Shadow* and we took notice what gamers had to say and tailored the sequel accordingly. Consequently the learning curve is much shallower, the interface is simplified and you can play orcs, undead and a lies in

multi-player battles. The single-player battles tend to be more strategic, too, rather than a free-for-all scrap. It's very much the *Shadow*

gamers that have influenced this sequel.

What's going to be the best bit of the game?

Throw the gauntlet down to your mates and have a two-player scrap. Why not have multi-player tournaments, too? Building your army up from scratch is just mately going to be the most rewarding experience, once the single player game has been mastered. The longevity alone is a worthwhile reason to buy the game

Will *Dark Omen* be better than any other game of its genre? And

if so, why?

Dark Omen is unique. There are no other real-time, real 3D strategy wargames out there and we're very proud of that

Are there any specific technical innovations to speak of?

Dark Omen runs at a steady 30 frames per second, uses a very advanced particle system and generates realistic shadows

What's the pedigree of the team?

We worked on *Out To Lunch* (a SNES platformer) and the first *Warhammer* game on the PlayStation and the PC

Why should anyone care about *Dark Omen*?

Because it is the only game that offers real-time 3D strategic battles with real intelligent enemies.

The AI was widely praised in *Shadow* and we've built on that further. This is challenging entertainment which will keep you entertained for hours and hours. And then there's the multiplayer game

Tell us a secret about the game you've told no one else.

Secrets aren't for telling until a lot later

1 Demoralised regiments still peg it when things go badly. **2** The new building graphics are lovingly detailed. **3** As you might have noticed, not all your opponents will actually be alive... **4** There's nothing like a good luck to sort the men out from the boys.

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LOADING

61% COMPLETE

primal
screen

(1) If you go to the cinema, don't forget to turn on the projector or you'll miss the porn film. (2) Coming attractions. (3) Shoot the screen if you don't like watching smut. (4) The toilets. It really is a high-class game. (5) He's about to get a new hole in his chest. (6) Not all the levels are as tasteless as this. (7) It's a pig-eat-pig world.



Duke Nukem 3D

'Come and get some!'

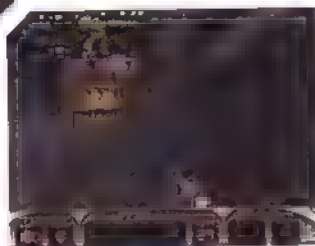


Style: 3D first-person shooter
Publisher: GT interactive
Developer: Aardvark
Release date: October

The problem with games like *Doom* and *Quake* is that they often take themselves too seriously. So when the mirth-filled *Duke Nukem* was released on the PC, it was like a breath of fresh air. After two years of incredible success, it looked like the PlayStation would miss out on this classic. Fortunately someone at GT saw fit to develop a PlayStation version. We spoke to Aardvark's Craig Leigh and Nick Bridger.



This is probably the first *Doom*-type game where you can take to the skies to batter the bad guys.



What's the game about, then?

Duke Nukem 3D is a first-person perspective shoot 'em up which immerses you in an ominous and futuristic universe that is as imaginative and a hazing as it is deadly. More than a technical and artistic achievement, *DN3D* is a classic, frantic, humorous massacre of a ten scam

How is it going to be different from the PC version?

There have been a number of changes and enhancements, while remaining true to 3D Realm's original vision. There's a whole new episode containing six levels, new enemies and a huge final boss, the graphics have been re-rendered with a higher degree of detail, there's new six - including new Duke phases - new and re-mastered music, improved in-game effects, and much more...

Duke Nukem is famous for its 'adventurous' sense of humour - have you had any problems with Sony about some of the game's more adult content?



The action starts the minute you turn on the game - you only just got off the plane and they're shooting at you.

So far we've had no problems with any versions, though the German product may need to be tinkered with - the usual alterations, such as weapons being replaced with pinions, and blood becoming green ooze

Why should people buy this game rather than any other of its kind?

To date there's no other first person perspective game that is as solid as *Duke* - no warping, no texture deformation, no cracks, no tears and you can look up and down, jump, crouch, swim and use a jetpack. It also contains superbly designed levels which are both frantic and humorous.



Are there any technical innovations to speak of?

Apart from squeezing the entire *Duke* game into 2 megs of RAM with the engine being so solid yes. You can quicksave your position at any point in-game to RAM (without memory card). And when getting close up to walls, there's far less pixelation and the whole game boots in less than a second after the initial. Sony screens - to name just a few.

Tell us a secret about the game you've told no one else. It contains pig-cops in drag.

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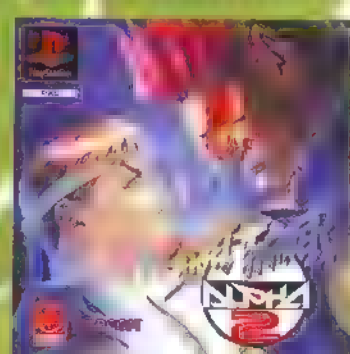
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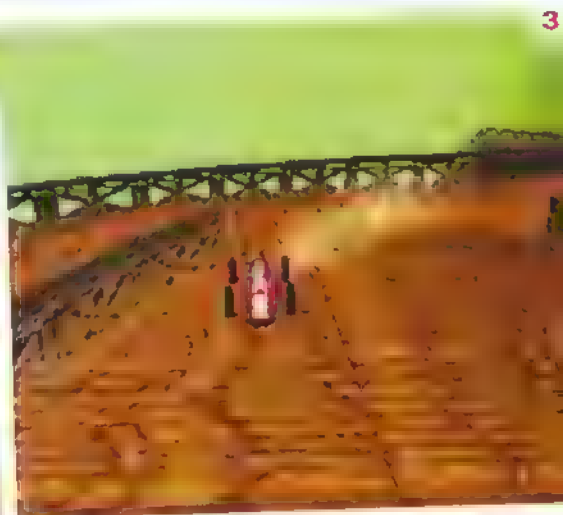


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64% COMPLETE

(1) There are lots of different track surfaces on which to take the supersonic cars for a spin. (2) When you play the game the graphics always re-draw a long way in the distance. (3) Keeping with its varied style, this course is mostly set on stilts.



Style: Cartoon driving
Publisher: Mindscape
Developer: Supersonic Software
Release date: October/November

When *Supersonic Racers* became one of the surprise hits, last year, you can bet your last quid bosses at Mindscape ordered the developers to get straight back to their keyboards and start on a sequel. When we heard plans were afoot for an October release we had to find out more. We tracked down Peter Williamson, of Supersonic Software, to quiz him about their latest creation.



In keeping with the original, the game can be viewed from a variety of views from overhead to behind the car. Nice touch.

Supersonic Racers 2XS

Coming around again

Describe *Supersonic Racers 2XS* in 100 words

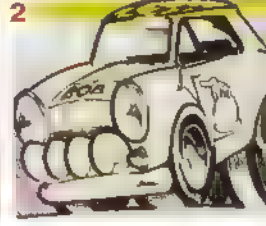
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Yes, very droll. Will *Supersonic Racers 2XS* be better than any other game of its ilk? If so, why? There are no other games in this title's genre – as a whole, *Supersonic Racers 2XS* is totally unique. It's the first great one-player game and the first great multi-player game rolled into one. It's the first completely immersive game (racing or otherwise) as well, and it's the first race game to add the element of exploration without detracting from the adrenaline rush of stomach-in-your-mouth racing.

Any technical innovations worth mentioning?

The whole game has been designed [over a year in development] on a custom-written, PlayStation-based 3D editing system. This means we can design directly on the PlayStation. As a

(1) The very tricky swamp level. (2) Each car started off as a detailed drawing before it became part of the game.



result what you see is what you get – not a distorted representation. This lets us test aspects of gameplay as we design the courses, allowing anything from gameplay-tweaking to minute changes in detail. Not to mention the fact that the game will have zero loading times due to some neat coding.

Have you got smart graphics to go with all this technical expertise? Of course. We've got all sorts of fancy stuff, from multi-colour transparency fogging to particle effect explosions. There's also incredible weather and lighting effects – you name it, we've got it. The computer AI is pretty special as well. The computer cars feature adaptive AI – basically they watch how you play and learn from your mistakes and apply them to their racing styles. This works both ways though, as you'll be able to watch the other drivers in action to see what little cheats they use and

then copy them yourself.

What's the pedigree of the team? We designed and developed the original *Mega Drive Micro Machines 2* (at the time *GamesMaster* mag called it 'possibly the most playable game in the world'). We also developed its sequels, *Micro Machines '96* and *Micro Machines Military*. We're a small team that work on only one game at a time – we like to concentrate all our energies into making that one game as good as possible, though. We've spent the last four years refining and innovating addictive racing games.

Tell us a secret about the game you've told no one else. In some of the tunnels you can find mini-games – watch carefully for the clues and pick up extra bonuses by beating the computer in these mini-games. Is that good enough for you?

actua

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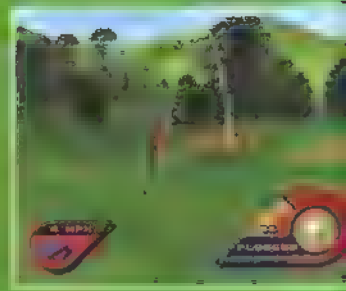
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PlayStation



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SPORTS

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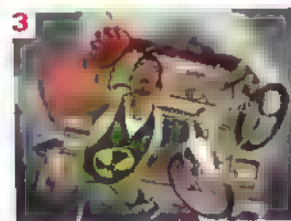


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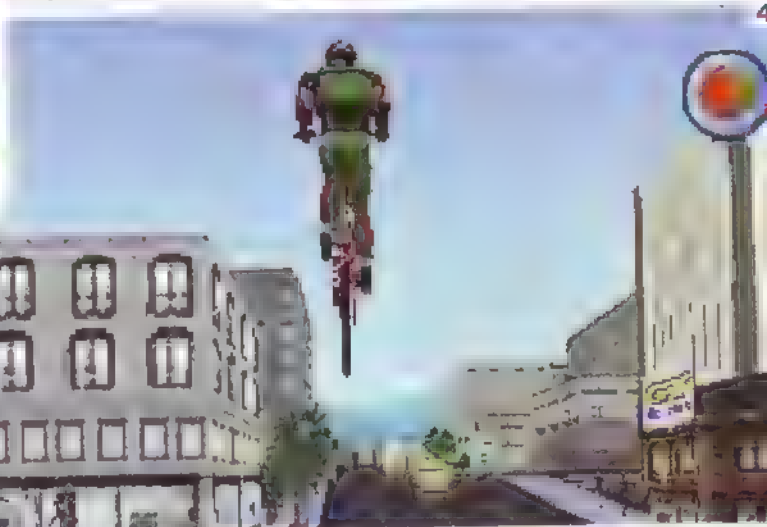


Courier Crisis

Peddalling a new gospel



[1] Back on the chain gang. Your job is to dodge the traffic and get the package there on time. [2] *Courier Crisis* looks to have more than a hint of *Road Rash* to its armour. [3] Part and parcel of being a bicycle messenger. [4] Quick audition for *ET*? Impressive. [5] Here lies the frame of a poor soul.



Style: Bike 'em Up

Publisher: BMG

Developer: New Level Software

Release date: Nov/Dec



On your bike, son. This is the first computer game devoted to the bicycle messenger, that poor soul who battles through the traffic, sack on back, to get that parcel there on time. They're sort of punk posties, if you will. *Courier Crisis*, then:

Describe the game in 100 words
Well, it's an arcade action game at its simplest level. As a bike messenger, you travel through five different worlds, exploring a huge 3D metropolis. While completing over 250 delivery missions, gamers face hundreds of obstacles such as angry street punks and lame pedestrians who get in the way, and more often than not, hinder the player's ability to get from one end of town to the other. Within 30 levels containing five main neighbourhoods and districts, players will experience full freedom of movement as they



explore Civic Centre, Skid Row, Waterfront, China Town and the Industrial Zone.

Is there anything in this game that we've not seen in any other?
Um, mountain bikes and BMXs. Although there were bikes in *ESPN Extreme Sports*.

What other games have influenced *Courier Crisis*?
I suppose you could take the old co-n-op *Paperboy* for starters. Then you might add in a drop of *Road Rash* for good measure.

What's going to be the best bit of the game?

When you're challenged to perform a range of tricks straight from the GT Bike pros, who were consulted on game play, design and integration of actual bike tricks.

Why will it be better than any other game of its ilk?
Because there isn't any other game of its ilk.

Any specific technical innovations to speak of?
In developing *Courier Crisis*, New Level Software have used a proprietary Multi-Channelled Data System, which enables the simultaneous, real-time streaming of CD-quality music, voice and

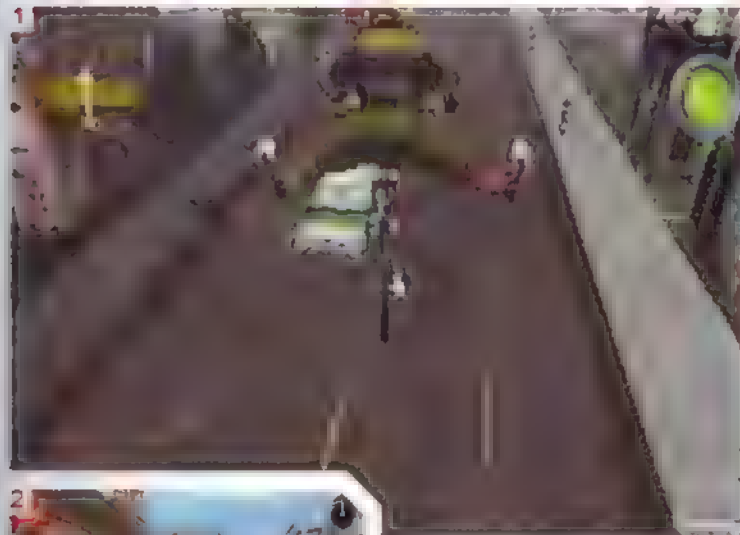


[1] The GT bike team worked closely with the developers. Hans 'No Way' Rey (ch7) is the tricks expert, apparently. [2] Innocent pedestrians are blown away in some of the rendered sequences.



primal screen

(1) Woooo hoooo! Wouldn't keep your legs apart like that old son. You could be in for a painful landing. (2) The man on the street fights back.



of accomplished group of industry veterans whose game credits include *Road Rash* for Sega CD, Sega Sports' *NFL's Greatest Teams*, *San Francisco vs. Dallas*, *Dungeon Master*, *Mac Brickout*, *Bass Masters Classic*, *NFL Game Day*, *NHL Face Off* for PlayStation, and *ESPN Baseball Tonight* for Sega CD

Why should anyone care about the game? Because no one has really attempted to bring that wonderful invent on, the bicycle to the small screen.

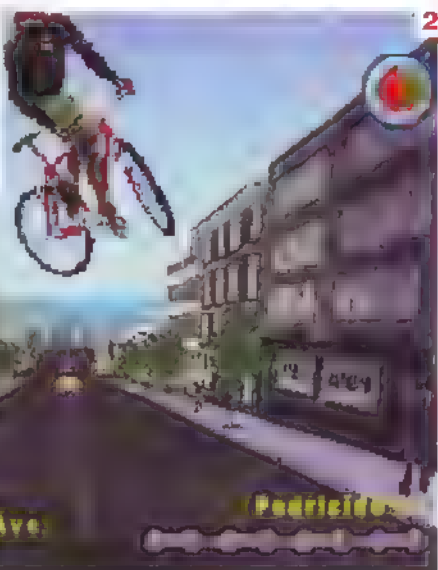
Tell us a secret you've told no one else
There's a special bonus 'penny farthing' level where you trundle along 18th century cobbled streets, avoiding hansom cabs. Possibly



to create an exciting pop culture
The game's soundtrack will
array of chemicals, beats and

What's the pedigree of the team?

...chum? The team is comprised



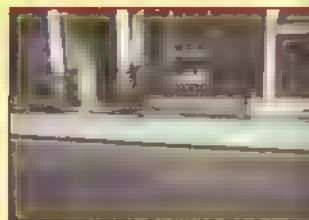
Mercedes-Benz badge awaiting contact with groin area. (2) The game includes a special tricks level where you can pull wheelies and 'take air'.

FOR SALE

SPORTS CARS & CLASSICS



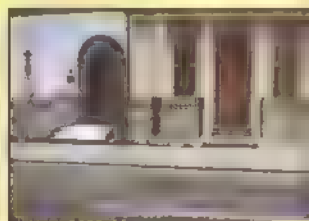
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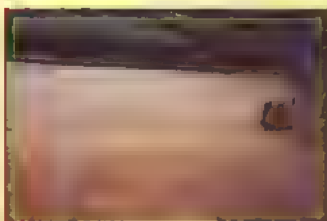
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blood red interior, untimely death of
owner forces widow to sell.....£91.0

GRAND THEFT AUTO

IT'S CRIMINAL NOT TO

COMING
ON PLAY
&



Jersey Devil

Satantic channel-hopping

(1) An early sight of one of the bosses (a fat man wearing a rug) as the Jersey Devil takes to his heels. (2) Ocean have high hopes for *Jersey Devil*. Although the version we saw wasn't compatible with the analogue controller, this option should be implemented into the game during the coming weeks. (3) The Devil is a sparky little character with a whirring tail and bright red eyes. Like a really furious Pink Panther. Only purple. (4, 5) Tread the boards and collect the bat wings to fly. (6) Here's a baboon about to make a monkey out of you.



Style: Platform game
Publisher: Ocean
Developer: Malofilm Interactive
Release date: November '97

Cartoonular platform antics in a free-roaming 3D environment?
Why, yes. The recent E3 games show, in Atlanta, saw a number of companies turning up to parade their as-yet unsigned wares and *Jersey Devil* was one of them. In stepped Mr Ocean and the rest, as they say, is history.

So *Jersey Devil*, in a nutshell?
Well, it's a platform game, and a 3D fellow at that. Bit of plot, first. The Jersey Devil was in born in 1735, the 13th child of Mother Leeds

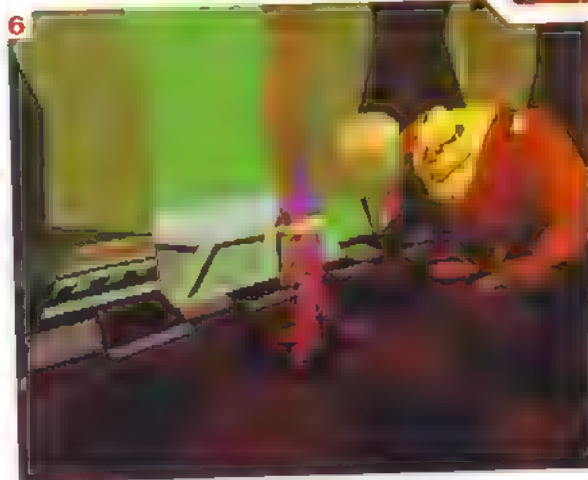
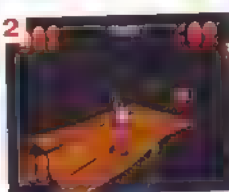
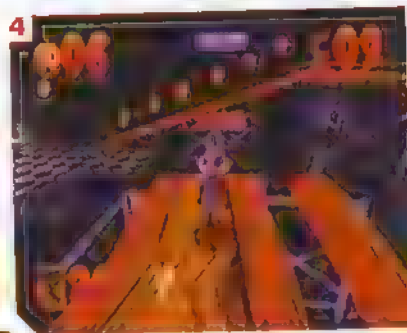
(true). Said mother curses the bairn while in labour, the child becomes a monster and thereafter it's high jinks all the way as the little fellow terrorises the neighbourhood. The game combines level-hopping with puzzle-solving and all in a true 3D, non-linear environment. There are some 11 missions in six 3D worlds to tackle, and pleasingly the game is compatible with the new analogue controller which means you'll be able to jog the little Devil

around the arena willy-nilly.

Is there anything in this game that we've never seen in any other?
A devil from jersey? The free-roaming 3D environment is fairly original PlayStation platform-wise. If you conveniently forget the *Jumping Flash*s, and the upcoming *Croc* (hum), *Gex 2* (promising) and *Rascal* (could go either way, Des)

What other games have influenced *Jersey Devil*?

The obvious openers are *Mario 64* and *Crash Bandicoot*, the latter certainly in the character design. But then the PlayStation is awaiting its first roam-as-you-will platform extravaganza. Hopefully,



Jersey Devil can fill the void

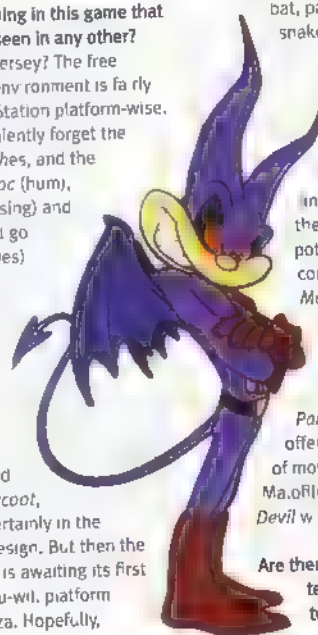
What's going to be the best bit of the game?

The character himself. He's got loads of different movements - he can breathe fire, make himself invisible and ride atop animals. He can somersault, glide and swing on ropes. And how many computer game protagonists are part bat, part cat, part snake and part horse?

Why will it be better than any other game of its ilk?

Because it's non-linear. You can explore the arenas and just potter 'til your heart's content, rather like in *Mario 64*. The PlayStation's other big platform titles such as *Crash Bandicoot* and *Pandemonium* never offered such freedom of movement that Malofilm promise *Jersey Devil* will provide

Are there any specific technical innovations to speak of?



(1) A night on the tiles for the Jersey Devil, with the added bonus of pumpkins to collect. (2) You don't destroy your enemies in the traditional 'thwack 'em' platform manner. It's all about puzzling conundrums. (3) And here's a twisting slide YOU WON'T HAVE SEEN BEFORE.

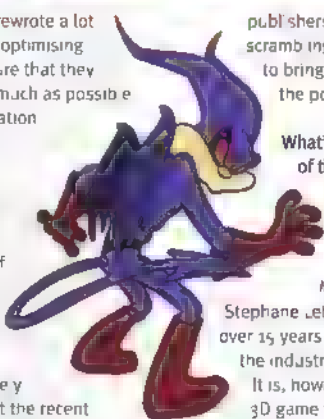
[1] Another boss. And a bossy one at that. She prannies about. Scarper, son. [2] Fortunately, you have the freedom to roam as you wish. [3] He looks a bit like Bubsy. [4] Moves like Mario.



And, the team rewrote a lot of the libraries, optimising off to make sure that they could glean as much as possible from the PlayStation hardware.

But it's hardly a 'dog name' title, is it?

In terms of Eighty Dog, at times and rest, the are relatively known. But at the recent show in Atlanta, European



publishers were scrambling for the rights to bring the game over the pond.

What's the pedigree of the team?

The core of the project's team Claude Pelletier, Martin Ross and Stephane Leblanc have over 15 years experience in the industry between them. It is, however, their first 3D game for the PlayStation.

A design for life



Jersey Devil stars a welter of suitably heinous fiends, all intent on taking the rise out of the little cherub. Mad Doctor Knarl and loathsome lackey Dennis Pumpkinhead are the worst. But hasn't Dennis got a great name?

Why should anyone care about the game?

Because it will be the first proper 3D platformer for the machine. It's what the world's been waiting for, isn't it? Sure, there's *Croc* on the way and *Rascal* and *Gex 2: Enter The Gecko*, but none of them will

have copied *Mano 64* like this.

Tell us a secret about the game you've told no one else. How the fact that *Jersey Devil* sh its 160,000 Gouraud-shaded polygons per second. Not bad, eh?

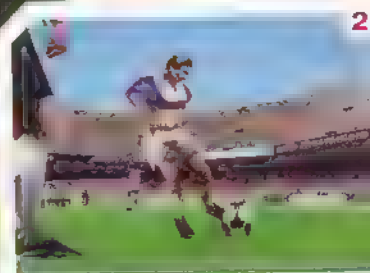
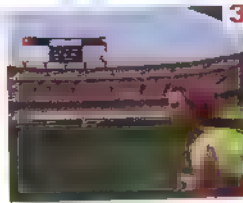
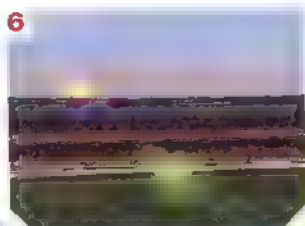


[1] The *Jersey Devil* always begins in a main room, off which are a number of other rooms, perhaps in a nod to *Super Mario 64*. [2] Who said green and purple don't go together? And with these red boots... [3] The little fellow has more than 20 different moves, including jumping, running, gliding and rope-swinging. [4] The finished version is set to have a four-minute-long introductory cartoon sequence. [5] This level is set in the inside of a cargo ship.

LOADING

79% COMPLETE

[1] When we were thinking of captions for this picture we had to mention the truly terrible kit. [2] That looks like a tinola turn to us. [3] Just when you think you've got a good picture of the ground, a bloody player gets in the way. [4] A nice bit of lens flare. [5] You can play the game from a variety of angles. [6] Ah, the setting sun.



FIFA: Road to World Cup '98

'PlayStation gets decent FIFA game' shocker

Style: Footie sim
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Sports
Release date: November

When FIFA '97 was released, last Christmas, it was universally panned by reviewers everywhere who thought it was far too slow to compete with the likes of *Actua* or *Adidas Power*. Unfortunately gamers paid

bugger all attention to us and voted with their pockets, easily making it the biggest-selling game over the festive period. Ten months later, news has reached us about the latest instalment to the FIFA franchise, *Road to World Cup '98*. We went straight to the source to ask the developers more details about one of the most popular series in games history.

Describe your game in 100 words
The idea of the game is to pick from 170 teams and guide them through qualification for the '98 World Cup Finals in France. You don't actually get to play in the World Cup – that will come later. At this stage you just have to endure the hell of qualifying for the championship. All those wonderful trips to Tallinn

to play the Estonians... you can even be the Estonians if you want that extra challenge.

The graphics are state of the art – we've even gone as far as hiring a kinesiologist to make sure every frame of animation looks spot-on. Along with the graphics, we've improved the commentary to include more than 40,000 words of script – hopefully with our new AI system there shouldn't be as many repeated phrases as before. Neil Baggin (a former *Actua Soccer* script writer) studied all three commentators – John Motson, Andy Gray and Des Lynam – for months prior to the recording to ensure that the phrases in the game are close to the phrases the commentators would actually use.

Is there anything in this game that we've never seen in any other?



[1] Just like *Match of the Seventies* – a top-quality afro. [2] A nifty little dance from this oriental goalscorer.

Comprehensiveness and accuracy for a start. All 170 teams who are currently trying to qualify for the World Cup, from Trinidad and Tobago to Italy, are included in the game. All team-names, kit colours and line-ups are accurate. The 16 stadiums (including the San Siro stadium in Milan, Ajax's new stadium and Barcelona's magnificent Nou Camp) will



In typical FIFA fashion, they've paid a lot of attention to detail – like the players' shadows cast by the floodlights.

(1) Incredibly these are in-game shots, but then FIFA never lacked the occasional graphical nicety. (2) The motion-capture experts have really gone to town with everything from the throw-ins to the goal celebrations in the game. (3) We couldn't really work this picture out - he's either injured or about to sneeze. (4) One of the more unconvincing views you can use to play the game - there are far better ones, we promise.



of them worked on the original *Actua Soccer*. Most people are football fans first and programmers second. We've even got two former professional footballers - one of them used to play for David Platt's old team, Bari, in Italy.

Who is your main competitor?
ISS Pro?

It's true that *ISS Pro* is thought to be the best of the lot at the moment, but we're confident we should be able to beat it. One big plus point is that we've got exclusive use of the World Cup 98 licence - when people play a game, they like to pretend they are the players, so it's always good to have the correct names.

What's your reaction to the (often hysterical) criticism leveled at the FIFA games?

It is hard when you spend so long working on a game and all people seem to do is rip it to pieces. Some of the press liked the game, others didn't - the criticism was by no means universal. Fortunately our sales show more people love them. We do take all criticism seriously - if it helps us to improve our game, then that's great. We're not expecting too much criticism this time round.



atmosphere of their parts. For extra we've also included the correct leagues in-game and a knock about of a real team. We've used the AI system to create refs and closer control and you to swerve the ball. Even motion capture makes it look and feel like you've got control.

Football's Statto and betting guru as a consultant to make sure all of the statistics used in the game are spot-on.

Why will it be better than any other game of its ilk?

We've had 150 of the most talented programmers, artists and producers working 20-hour days, seven days a week, to ensure realism in every aspect of the game. We looked at all the other games to work out what we needed to include to make sure ours was the best football game on the market.

Some games have forgone the idea of being a simulation in order to make the game faster. We think we've found the balance between speed and realism, between arcade and simulation.

Any specific technical innovations to speak of?

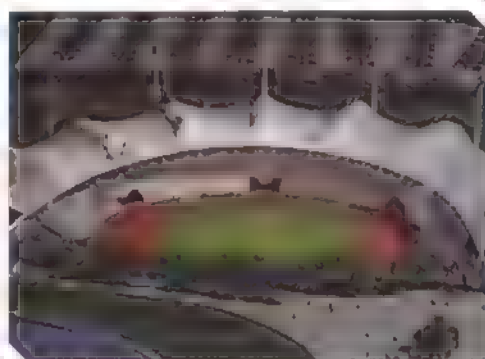
Last year we took such a big leap to the 32-bit engine. What we've done now is to refine that technology and ensure that it works as smoothly as possible. We've got one of the best motion capture studios in the world, so we were able to get plenty of top quality captures from world-class footballers like David Ginola. To make things look as good as possible we used him as our model for the 200 motion captures, along with less famous players for all the other positions, so we could make sure that defenders move like defenders, wingers like wingers, and so on.

What's the pedigree of the team?

They're the best in the industry. Quite a few of the team worked on the original *FIFA*, some of them worked on *FIFA '97*, others have worked on *NHL* and *NBA*, and two

What's going to be the best bit of the game?

Definitely the elation of qualifying for the World Cup 98, but there's going to be plenty of other things to be proud of. We're particularly proud of the work of our lead programmer, John Coughran (*Fantasy*



The developers have made sure that all 16 stadiums used look as accurate as possible. The beautiful twin towers of Wembley Stadium, home to the English team, and stadiums from Europe and South America all compete for the best design in the game.

LOADING

85% COMPLETE



Electronic Arts

It's that time of year again



(1) The Green Bay Packers are one of the strongest teams in the NFL, with quarterback Brett Favre perhaps the best ball-chucker in the league. (2) Watch their energy ratings closely. (3) The sideways view.

There are certain things we can use for working out what time of year it is. If leaves are falling from the trees it must be autumn, if baubles are decorating trees it should be Christmas, and if EA are giving preview copies of their new sports games it must be summer... Exactly on time, our preview copies of *Madden '98*, *NASCAR '98* and car-killer game *Auto Destruct* arrived in the post, so we decided to find out more about these new and improved versions.

Madden '98

Style: American Football simulation

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Developer: EA Sports

Release date: November

Another *Madden* game! Surely after five or six attempts you should have got it perfect by now? No way! When you look at the differences between '98 and '97, you'll agree it was worth us doing a new one

Okay, so what are the new bits? Well to start with, John Madden spent a few days at our Vancouver

offices designing a lot of new plays. We've kept the same intuitive control for the game – it was one of the plus points that you could pick it up and play it easily within a few minutes. We've updated all the statistics so all the players are with their latest teams, not to mention new commentary from the man himself and summaries of all the plays.

How have you improved the graphics?

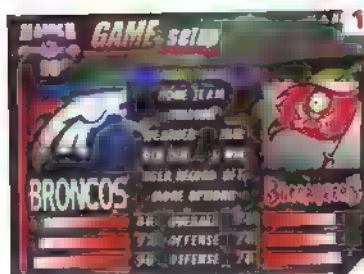
It can be quite hard to get the graphics just right with a game like *Madden* because there are so many ball players on the field at the same time, all running and performing their own moves like blocking, catching or running. We're particularly proud of the celebration routines – we motion captured some famous ones especially for '98. We also increased the frame rate to supersonic levels so the game looks ever more realistic than before. If that's at all possible in a *Madden* game!

One fault we often find with field-based games is the lack of decent stadiums and crowds...

You'll be pleased with *Madden '98* then. We took photos of all the stadiums to make sure they were as accurate as possible. The result was well worth all the time and effort – football fans should be able to instantly recognise where they are playing with just a quick glance at the stadiums. It's going to be a lot of fun.

Finally, any tips for newcomers to American Football?

Sure. If you're stuck with a '4th down and long', try using the 'Hail Mary' play to get the extra yards you need. That should get you out of trouble.



(1) As you'd expect from a game based on the most statistic-filled sport in the world, *Madden* is crammed full of them. (2) The *Madden* classic view is the best view of the lot of them.



Auto Destruct 1

Genre: Shoot 'em up
Developer: Electronic Arts
Publisher: EA Sports
Release date: October

What's it all about?

Champion motor racing driver Lazarus has witnessed the brutal murder of his wife and daughter by members of a cult of disciples of Lazarus. He is then abducted by a mysterious person and given the chance to escape. A messenger supplies him with information regarding the cult's attacks, and you have to do anything you can to stop them. Succeed and you'll be able to get more money, plus the equipment you need to get on with the Disciples of Lazarus. You'll drive around a lot of the Disciples any time you do this you've got to be able to travel at high speeds, carrying some of the money you can buy. You'll have to be able to travel at high speeds, carrying some of the money you can buy. You'll have to be able to travel at high speeds, carrying some of the money you can buy.

Other weapons can you use? You can use mines which rip a hole in the ground when they drive over them, and bombs which help



you to escape close attention from the enemy and some very nasty lasers. But our favourite weapons are the five homing missiles which rise out of your bonnet, lock on to their target and blast them into the middle of next week.

So it's like Ridge Racer with guns?

Well, we wouldn't say that. Rather than just drive round a set track trying to beat a time, *Auto Destruct* gives you freedom to take any route through the cities (San Francisco, New York and Tokyo) to complete a variety of missions.

How many missions will there be? What will they be like?

When we've finished there should be around 30 in all. These will range from really simple ones, like

finding some money or escorting a friend to your safe house, all the way up to attacking the cult's base. *Auto Destruct* will feature a similar degree of strategy to the *Strike* games where you have to be careful with your ammunition and fuel as they can run out very quickly and leave you stuffed.

NASCAR '98

Style: Racing simulation
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Sports
Release date: October

Tell us about your game

For people who don't spend all day reading about American motor sports, NASCAR stands for the National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing. If you've ever seen the Tom Cruise film *Days of Thunder*, you've seen NASCAR racing.

The first NASCAR game for the PlayStation wasn't very good. Why should we pay attention to this one?



(1) Once you've got enough money, you can upgrade your little machine guns for this great set of missiles. (2) Your car looks like a cross between *Knight Rider* and the top cars from *Deathrace 2000*. (3) Each city looks quite convincing as you blast through the streets at ultra-high velocity.



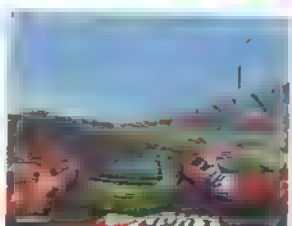
It's totally different from the other one. We made a few mistakes last time, but we've sorted them out for this version. We've really worked hard on getting all the details spot on, from car skid marks to the sponsors' names.

A lot of people say the thing that really makes driving games is the quality of the opposition. Do you agree?

Absolutely! In *NASCAR '98* we spent time getting the drivers as intelligent as possible. The Artificial Intelligence is so advanced that different drivers and cars actually take on the characteristics of their real life counterparts. Aggressive drivers on the real NASCAR circuit will drive that way in the game, and team mates on the circuit will help each other with positions and so on. The Artificial Intelligence is something special in this game.

For some reason, developers love to use heavy metal rock music for the soundtracks of racing games - are you?

No... Well, yes, it's could almost be called rockabilly rock - it's a strange hybrid between guitar rock and country (it is better than it sounds, honest). If you don't like the music then you can always turn it down and listen to the dazzling special effects (we've used real engine, pit and crowd noises), or the commentary by US TV star Bob Jenkins. Should keep you happy.



The cars look a damn sight better than they did in the original. With such a closely fought game you can expect a hell of a lot of impressive crashes.



It can be very annoying to have successfully negotiated a tricky corner and then some schmuck smacks you from behind. (2) Bowls tracks often are boring but they can be very interesting to race as you need to keep your concentration levels high.



Countdown to Meltdown.

Stop the war before it begins in the explosive,
multi-vehicular sequel to Soviet Strike.

NUCLEAR 
STRIKE



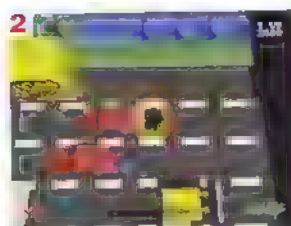
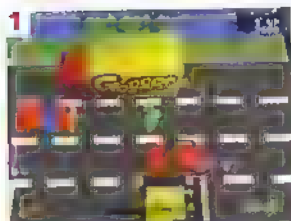
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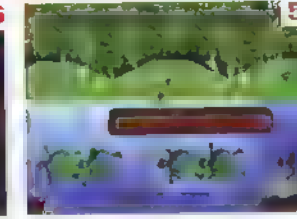
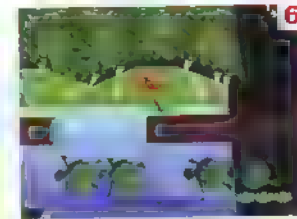
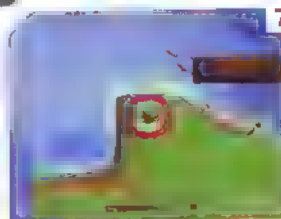
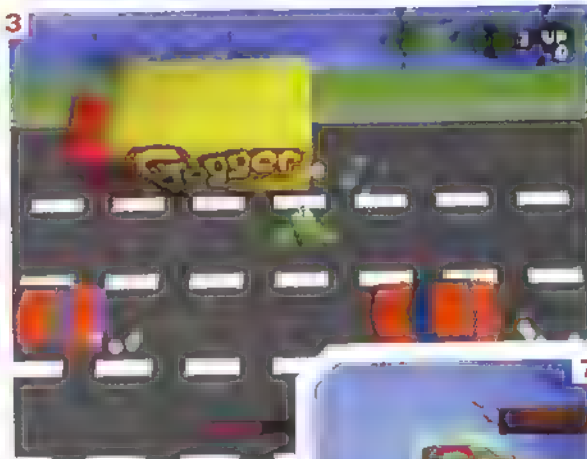
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Frogger

Caught on the hop



[1] *Frogger* is one of the best-loved computer games ever. [2] And the little fellow still gets squelched. [3] Early levels are easy to hop through. [4] Wooo, check out the 3D. [5] The first levels are entitled 'Retro'. [6] Over the road, jump on a turtle, hop on a log and you're away. [7] Bit difficult, here.



Style: Action puzzle

Publisher: Hasbro Interactive

Developer: SCE Cambridge

Release date: November

This old fellow has been around for years. Even the Green Cross Code man used to play it when he had a spare moment. But hey, it's the Nineties and *Frogger*'s back, only this time in 3D. The game's enthusiastic producer, Chris Down, rabbits on...

Describe your game in 100 words
Frogger is based on the original arcade hit of the '80s. We retained the elements from the original that made it a classic and added a few more goodies for the 'challenge-hungry' gamers of today. The

object is still the same – basically to get from point A to point B. *Frogger* now exists in a real-time 3D world but it's still the *Frogger* style gameplay. The play parameters are no longer confined to the little road and river from the old game.

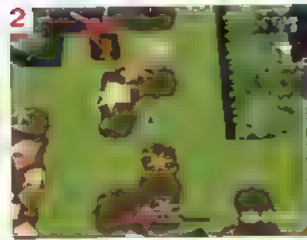
Is there anything in this game that we've never seen in any other? Absolute attention to gameplay. You haven't seen 'avoid 'em up', a *Frogger* style pays nce the original, 15 years ago, and you've never seen *Frogger* play with a power croak, super-hop and heat-

seeking tongue! The control method is totally *Frogger* too. If you haven't played the original, you'll still be able to pick up the controller and get right into the new game.

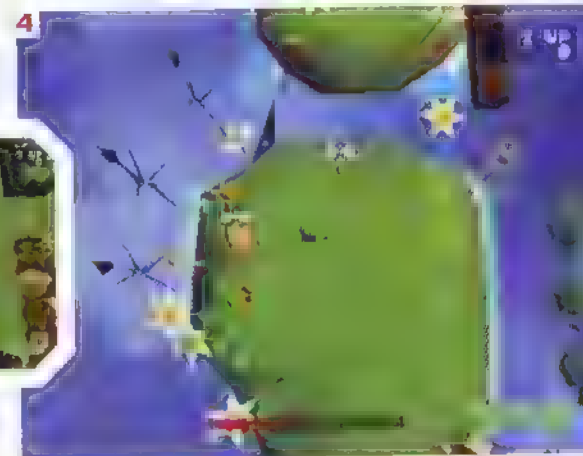
What can we expect to see in this version that wasn't in the original? In addition to the new special abilities, you will see 40 unique levels in nine graphically different

zones. You also will experience some puzzle-solving with switches, exploding barrels, crushers, frog-eating plants and a whole slew of other things that extend the classic *Frogger* gameplay pattern.

What's going to be the best bit of the game? Specifically, I love the mowers... they're absolutely mad! I also think the multi frog race mode (two- or



[1] Here's one of *Frogger*'s most difficult tasks. The river is flowing fast and there's a vast jump on to the next set of floating logs. [2] Brilliant. This is the lawnmower level where there's a lot of 'hover'. [3] You have to jump into the little gaps and then hop off when the mowers have gone past. [4] It might be a flowery garden but there are loads of hazards.



(1) A statement of intent, indeed. Flashy little lilypad, eh? (2) What a frog's gotta do, a frog's gotta do. The tumbleweed busters along at a terrific rate and it's a nightmare to traverse. (3) We had a lot of trouble getting the frog's legs through this little lot. The beetles bumble along and hey, avoid the cacti. (4) The tumbleweed bounces in from all angles. (5) Good luck.



environment. Also, the water effect is incredible. It has a true 3D floor with an undulating animated mapped water surface with fish swimming underneath.

Tell us about some of the different levels

The game starts out with Retro levels, which are 3D representations of the original game that we all know and love. These are really just the training grounds for the rest of the game, though. The sky levels are trippy, with rising and falling balloons, biplanes and slippery clouds. The desert levels are cool, as they look like they're straight out of the *Road Runner* cartoons, complete with vultures and falling boulders. There are a total of 10 graphically different areas... Oops, you're only supposed to know about nine of them, though.

What's the pedigree of the team?

The team is great. They are comprised of two groups. Sony Computer Entertainment

Cambridge is developing the game (previously Millennium Interactive) – you may remember their *James Pond* series, *Defcon 5* and *Creatures*. The other team is internal, at Hasbro Interactive, and includes game/level design and QA, with favourites like *Monopoly*, *Risk*, and *Battleship*. Here's an interesting tidbit for you... In the early '80s, Parker Brothers published the original *Frogger* on a number of console and computer systems, including the Commodore 64 and Atari 2600 VCS. Today, Parker Brothers is a Hasbro division, and several people on the Hasbro Interactive team, including our president, were involved with the original *Frogger* launch.

Why should anyone care about your game?

Frogger is a game that's fondly remembered, and for good reason. Just about any gamer that sits down to a 'quick' game of emulated *Frogger* finds themself hooked. This gameplay addiction has been captured in the new game, but is even better. The game has tons of depth, tons of variety, tons of challenge and almost infinite replay value – and that's just the single player mode. The multi-player mode is clever, simple and incredibly addictive. [NB: We've been playing this a lot at PSM and Chris is not lying]

Tell us a secret about the game you've told no one else.

Okay, there's a secondary mission to the game that no one will figure out until much of the way through the game... these golden frogs. If you collect all of them, then something really cool happens at the end of the game!

player split-screen) will be a great industry kick-ass! Generally, every level of the game has this 'I've gotta try it one more time' addictiveness.

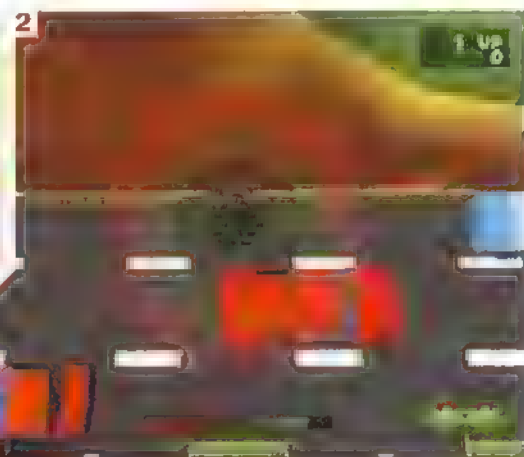
Why will it be better than any other game of its ilk?

Frogger uses one of the greatest, known gameplay patterns of all time. This, coupled with some 3D graphics and an

incredibly addictive multi-player mode, make it a 'must have' game, in my book.

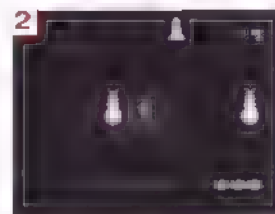
Any specific technical innovations to speak of?

Frogger has more complex animated entities moving on screen at any one time than most games. The play is not about just a frog, but about *Frogger* interacting with and avoiding everything in the



(1) The programmers have cunningly managed to keep all the best aspects of the original gameplay and add extra dimensions. One, in fact. (2) And, of course, the roads are much busier since the wee fella first tried to cross.

(1) A very peculiar level, this. The glow worm-type things light up the way but there are still cars zooming along the roads. (2) And do use the Green Cross Code.



Hype

The TV campaigns



Call the Style Police and sack the Creative Director. It's *X-Files*-meets-*JFK* as bespectacled '50s FBI-type Dwight P. Dibley begins the campaign for Society Against PlayStations (SAPS). After pulling on rubber gloves, Dwight moves through kitsch *Brady's Bunch*-style



And then suddenly Sony came good with the first of their I-thought-it-was-a-real-documentary-the-first-time-I-saw-it type of adverts. Lee Hung, an ex-martial arts film star, now a fit-as-you-like, fiftysomething Grand Master, shows footage of his students performing moves that defy the law of physics.

AD INFINITUM



Sony in pole position. Fair play, this time we were done like a kipper. One Friday evening, there's a quick break in *JFI Friday* as the PSM team are taking a well-earned break in front of the TV, before supping a well-earned Friday night pint. From the shanty towns of some Brazilian backwater, a broken man



By now, you can smell a rat (or is that a handicoot?) and are on your guard. Even so, this spoof-American news clip (much like the ones in *The Day Today*) keeps you fooled for a while. At the Piggly Wiggly convenience store in downtown Miami, a man has been



By now you almost have a sixth sense when it comes to these adverts and can sense them in an almost telepathic manner, which is spooky because 'the number of people with extraordinary mental powers is growing' according to Israeli neuroscientists. Dr Katz



instead, complete with 2-4 children, and then a hackneyed scientific lab scenario, warning of the PlayStation's harmful potential. Great sets, reasonable dialogue, brilliant manic mice which explode to great effect. But you can't help feeling that Dwight is a tosser and the whole idea is ill-conceived at best.



The ageing ninja father figure looks baffled as he concedes that these are moves the origin of which he has no knowledge. And then just as you're being sucked in and waiting for Arthur C Clarke to cut in with a voice-over, you sense all is not quite right. Clips of Tekken appear. It's a rouse. And you were toused.

As we ready ourselves for the PlayStation's latest TV campaign supernova, PSM look back at some *ad hoc* attempts by Sony to get ahead in advertising. From when Sony made SAPS of themselves, *ad nauseam* through to the splendid pseudo-documentary plus-punchline creations of *F1* and *Tekken*. Wander with us, then, through the ad mire...



voices about his days as a Formula One driver. Poverty is mixed with great wealth to great effect. Regret, pathos and bitterness help build the drama as he recalls the crash that ended it all. The detail is superb, right down to the celebrities bearing badly constructed footplate. Then F1 appears. We've been 'ed. Great!



might on security cameras, acting erratically, according to Officer Donovan. When the said black and white film is shown, the erratic man is quite obviously a nut who is seen running round the shop in bonkers fashion. Officer Donovan tries to play down talk of an epidemic. Cue *Crash Bandicoot* footage.



regional law there are believed to be 200 new states of mind. Ironically the number of new PlayStation games on the market. You're ahead of us, aren't you? The new VIDEO this is? What follows are a host of firestarters, human electricity generators, and levitators seen going through their paces. So what's next?

Feedback

This month, a few plain truths about women gamers, the irritations of game censorship, and why poor-quality titles escape the net...

Sisters are doing it...

I'm one of four per cent of female gamers and I'm a little annoyed at some of you guys out there who want to defend the minority. You seem to think us girls are capable of playing console games, but we haven't the intelligence to stick up for ourselves. Unfortunately it does seem more men are interested in keeping the minds active by beating up fantasy players. However, I have a theory! Most women I know who don't play are either happier watching soaps (sad, know) or, although they want to learn the joys of gameplay, they never get round to it. And also think that women enjoy beating men up just as much as other games. I don't think ads can be aimed just towards women. If I see a game I like the look of, either hire it and decide whether it's worth the money, or I wait for the demo and then decide. Same as you guys, I expect.

On another point, Sony please take note, of all the games I've played, I have to say that I've found *Broken Sword* the most annoying. I've just got to Ireland, picked the wire snare and tried to fix the gas washer, but George Stobbart just stands there and shrugs so I can't get the gem. I've even phoned up the helpline and read it the way they said and I got the same result. I'm really hacked off. Can anyone give me any other help?

Jacqui Hogg,
London

The marketing of computer games is aimed at the male of the species because they're the ones who generally buy them. And vice versa. It's self-perpetuating. But videogames, like movies, pop music and ginger beer are for everyone. We have mothers addicted to *Mario 64* and sisters who can't go a day without a fix of *Crash*.

Bandicoot Gender doesn't come into it. As for *Broken Sword*, check out issue 10 of *PlayStation Power* - the tips book has a walk through of the full game. You can get hold of it by calling Back Issues on 01225 822510.

Kicking off

Firstly, how can you slate *Kick Off 2* (Feedback, PSM22). In a history of football games, to exclude it would be like ignoring WWI. It may not be great now, compared to *Sense Soccer*, but there is nothing I have seen on the PlayStation to beat it. OK, so it's excellent at all these wonderful graphics routines, and so on, but I would take my Amiga over a PlayStation on any day. You can say what you like about it, but it still has the best version of *Worms* on the market as far as ease of play goes. Many companies

started out on the machine. I admit it's day has probably passed now, as far as a gaming machine goes, but to disregard games which were amazing at the time simply because they don't appear so good now is ridiculous. It may also be prudent not to insult many of your readers in such an obvious fashion. This will result in a lack of sales, even though it

will probably be negligible compared to your overall coverage.

Jon Whitcutt,
jd@kerridge.com

Some of you may be aware that in the early Nineties, games mags and readers bickered in the small-minded way we are wont about the relative benefits of *Kick Off 2* over *Sensible Soccer* and vice versa. Essentially, the Amiga Football Wars were a brief exchange, a volley of cannonfire, ▶

DR FEELGOOD

Having now been the proud owner of a PlayStation for two months, I feel, compelled to drop you a line. The whole experience has been nothing short of fabulous right from the first moment I bought the PlayStation as a joint purchase with my girlfriend. The first time I fired it up was at my parent's house on their stereo colour TV. Wow, I was stunned. The demo disc was inspired. Then, a week later, I set it up at my home where it was neatly integrated into my ProLogic set up. Oh my God, *Wipeout 2097* in a dark room in surround sound is the biggest adrenaline rush I've had in ages. Since then we've bought *Tekken 2*, *Tomb Raider* and *Ridge Racer*. I've already ordered *Rage Racer*, *V-Rally* and a steering wheel.

However the most awesome experience was yet to come. I'm a self-employed film composer/mixer/recordist based in a London studio. I had to wait several weeks for the right time, planning the set-up and making new leads, and then one day the big moment finally arrived. The room was silent, in blackout, and then as if the heavens had opened up came the Sony title screen accompanied by the very familiar jingle. On this time it sounded different. I had finally persuaded the directors that they should let me run my mighty console in the main dubbing theatre. Eighteen-foot screen, tens of thousands of pounds worth of Dolby audio equipment and all under the control of my now shaking fingers.

What followed is hard to describe. Suffice it to say that I didn't believe anything could have assaulted my senses in such a rambunctiously pleasant way! I will never forget the experience, which I have to say was again maximised by the awesome *Wipeout 2097*. Running *V-Rally* with two steering wheels in vertical split-screen mode has to be my next aim. There's no doubt my life's a happier one thanks to the PlayStation. By the way, great mag prosonics@btinternet.com (Richard Todman)

Brimey, a real life, shiny, happy person. An 18ft screen? It sounds absolutely awesome. Imagine rattling along to The Prodigy's *Firestarter* in *Wipeout 2097* with that piece of kit. We're jealous as anything. We must pop round sometime.



The sensational *Wipeout 2097* - ever played it on an 18ft screen?

In a world run by meat barons and corporate scum,
your entire race is pie filling.

Escape from the daily grind
and seek your destiny.

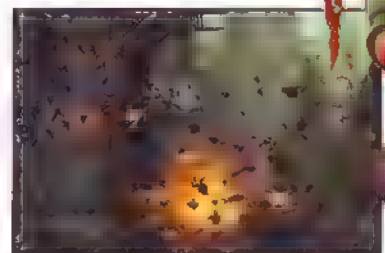
Saviour. Or salami. Sound Odd?
Welcome to Oddworld.



Ow!



owww!



OWWWWWW!



ODD WORLD
INHABITANTS
www.oddworld.com

GT Interactive
Software
www.gtinteractive.com

Letters

E mail psm@futurenet.co.uk World Wide Web site http://www.futurenet.co.uk

► but they left bitter r f s which have yet to heal. You sided with Kick Off 2 or Sensible Soccer. And never the twin.

Ex games an ma, and now PR cum marketing supremo at THQ Dave Perry re opened the wounds in his sp end id letter, accusing us of shunning Kick Off 2 in our footie feature (PSM20) in favour of Sensible Soccer. We replied, satab y tongue in-cheek. No offence meant.

Screenshot in the dark

As the proud owner of a full complement of PSMs, I wouldn't have thought that my first letter would have been a complaint so let's call this a query. No doubt along with many others, I was looking forward to Konami's ISS Pro and therefore the review. Although the review itself was accurate enough, the problem was with the misleading screenshots. Of the 20-plus printed, I found on y two that actually showed the game from the angle from which it's played. The rest were zoomed-in rep ay shots, a l very nice but I'm sure I couldn't have been the on y reader who thought that this was the awkward angle from wh ch the game was played and that the basic (superbly playable) structure of the SNES classic and Deluxe had been thrown out of the window on favour of a 32-bit 3D monster. Thankfully I believed the hype and bought the title to be greeted with a finely polished, sideline-viewed nostalgia trip that was well worth the nine out of 10.

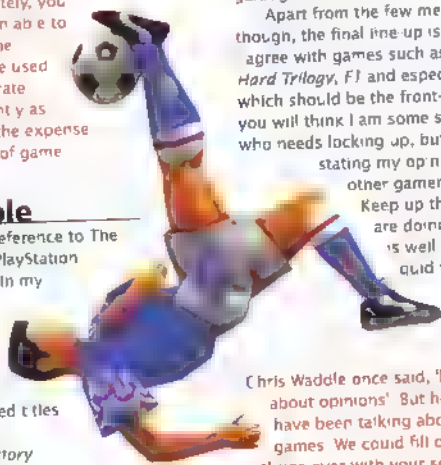
Maybe I'm being slightly OTT when compared to the free-ancing nightmare review of Need For Speed 2, but I believe that apart from a fully playable demo, screenshots still give the most reliable insight into the game. Still, it's on y a small criticism of an otherwise faultless two years. Keep on keepin' on.

Fat Bob,
Manchester

Thanks for the letter. Far cop perhaps we got a l ttle bit carr ed away with the respendent visual detail of the ISS players. Unfortunately, you wouldn't have been able to see the finery in the side-on view so we used close-ups to illustrate the point, and right y as you point out, at the expense of the 'real' looks of game.

Fifty quibble

I'm writing with reference to The Readers' Top 50 PlayStation Games (PSM21). In my opinion, most of the readers need the r heads examining. Why have they included titles such as Descent, Warhammer, Victory Boxing, Ridge Racer and Command & Conquer, which are all rubbish and the biggest one of all is the dull est game ever! Where the hell are games such as ISS Pro, Twisted Metal World Tour and Micro Machines V3? These



ISS Pro, as seen from the more realistic sideline view.

should be in the top 10 rather than the garbage on the top spot.

Apart from the few mentioned above, though, the final line-up is almost correct, agree with games such as Worms, Die Hard Trilogy, F1 and especially Tekken 2, which should be the front-runner. I know you will think I am some sort of psycho who needs locking up, but I am just

stating my opinion and I think other gamers will agree.

Keep up the fine work you are doing on the mag. It is well worth the five quid we pay for it every time.
M Logan,
Leeds

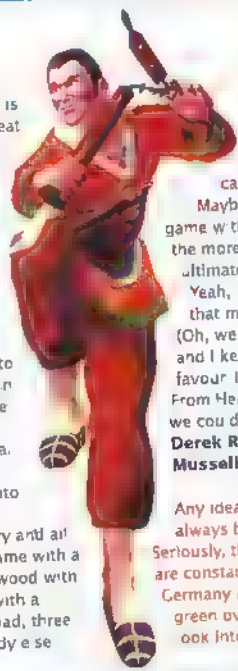
Chris Waddle once said, 'Football is all about opinions'. But he might as well have been talking about PlayStation games. We could fill our letters page thrice over with your software recommendations. The three games you reckon should be in the top 10 were released after the ball ot box was officially closed AND DON'T EVER SAY THAT RIDGE RACER IS RUBBISH AGAIN. See what we mean.

BLUNT BLADE

rented Soul Blade recently and the two-player mode is quite payable but other than that, it's just another beat 'em up. Ho hum.

Also, it's been nibbled a bit for UK release. Why did they change the name of the game, but still have the Edge Master Mode and leave the name of the character/sword as Soul Edge? L. Long using a three-sectioned staff instead of nunchaku is the other obvious change. Do the people who make these decisions think that no one in this country knows what nunchaku are, just because there's a ban on showing them? Whose idea was this anyway? Sony? NAMCO? ELSPA? BBFC? Who did this to my game? Adult gamers are still getting a raw deal in this country. In many cases we are being treated like children because we enjoy a hobby that has long been considered the exclusive province of anti-social teenagers.

Isn't it odd that soap operas, beamed directly into millions of homes every day, can feature storylines involving A DS, incest, murder, drug-taking, adultery and all manner of petty crime, but we can't have a videogame with a character carrying what is, essentially, two bits of wood with a bit of chain between them? THREE bits of wood with a chain between them, that's fine, though! Two bits bad, three bits good? I mean, what is going on here? Everybody else



gets to wander around, carrying large bits of sharp metal that would turn anyone they hit into something fit only for the Sainsbury cold cuts counter at 45p a slice, but L. Long can't carry nunchaku.

Maybe someone could be persuaded to do a Yaroze game with special weapons like the 'half brick in a sock', or the more powerful upgrade, 'house brick in a sock'. The ultimate weapon would, of course, be a 'rock in a sock'!

Yeah, know, I'm gibbering, but these moron c animals that mess with my games just because they feel like it, (Oh, we must protect the children!) they really p**s me off, and I keep wondering if there's any way to return the favour. Leave us to play Big Gun Psycho Death Agon es From Hell in peace. Maybe you could suggest some ways we could start to make this happen.

Derek Richardson,
Musselburgh

Any ideas, readers? The 'snooker ball in a stocking' has always been one of our favourites. Awfully dangerous. Seriously, though, it's more than a little worrying when games are constantly being fiddled with 'for our own safety'. Germany is much worse - they change the colour of blood to green over there. This kind of censorship is something we'll look into in the coming months.

Dark forces at work

It could be that I'm rather naive, but would like someone to tell me what makes it so difficult for a games tester to say to a games programmer, 'Sorry mate, but this STINKS'. The Mega Drive was legendary for having a glut of totally unplayable crap and while the PlayStation catalogue isn't nearly as bad, there are a few notable examples. For instance, couldn't the guys who tested Dark Forces have said as much? I mean, what are games testers for, if not to point out faults? I know they have to look for bugs and glitches, but surely along the way they would realise if the game they are testing is cack?

It's very probable that I don't know enough about this to criticise, but I just want a company - any company - to explain how, after Tekken and Virtua Fighter, can a tester send back Streetfighter: The Movie to its programmers with a little note attached saying, 'Nice one, chums, we liked it'. Do testers have any authority on the game itself, or are they merely there for the bugs? For £45, I don't want to end up

with crap. I believe an explanation is in order, preferably from the heathens responsible for Dark Forces - it was LucasArts' snivelling excuse for a game that set me off.

Kevin Dellaquaglia,
Aberdeen

Different software companies have different relationships with their games testers. Many testers are drafted in for a few hours after they come home from school and are there simply to look for bugs, others work full-time in a more pro-active role. The problem is that many programmers and producers are simply too close to their game to see any possible faults it might have. And when they do realise that it 'stinks', chances are that the publishers have invested too much money in the project to let it fall by the wayside. Hey presto, crap game arrives on the shelves. These are often titles that the publishers don't send to magazines, hoping that we won't realise they're out and therefore not review them. (see our Quality Control feature, PSM19). But it only damages their reputation in the long term.



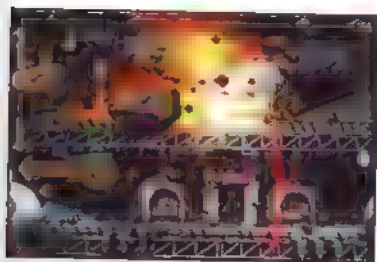
'Oh that the developers had some mastery of the Force' we said of Dark Forces (PSM17). Are games testers responsible for substandard releases?

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Letters

Q&A, Official UK PlayStation Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.



1 What has happened to the Bitmap Brothers? The creators of such wonderful games as *Speedball 2* and *Magical Pockets* seem to have entirely disappeared from all formats.

2 Other mags have carried rumours of a PlayStation conversion of the mighty *Screamer 2*. Is such a thing about to appear, or is it just more tat-mag lies?

3 I picked up an article from a PlayStation newsgroup, the other day, which claimed it was possible to de-nationalise a PlayStation by simply removing one of the chips. Is this possible, and is it legal?

4 If any of your users want to participate in the creation of a brand-new PlayStation website, would they please e-mail me at tom@tg.prestel.co.uk.

Tom Green
tom@tg.prestel.co.uk

1 The Bitmap Brothers have gone to ground. Wounded by the specialist press reviews of the last PC game *Z*, they took home



Tekken 3: due to be released in March next year.

the rabbit AND ball. When news breaks, you'll hear it right here.

2 *Screamer 2* is not going to happen. Ever.

3 Tricky business, chips. You can get them 'chipped' which enables you to run a wider variety of discs but you're taking risks with the machine. And if you start running illegal software you could get in

trouble with The Sweeney.

1 Best of luck

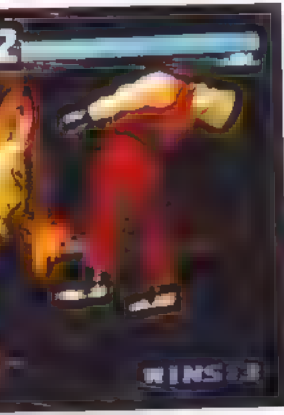
When will you do a preview on *Premier Manager '98* and when will it be released?

A. Whitworth
brundish@angliantel.co.uk

There's not an awful lot to see at the moment apparently. But hopefully we can bring you a Primal Screen next month and a preview later on. Publishers' Cream in reckoning the game should be out before Santa turns up.

I've heard a rumour that the best strategy game ever, *Civilisation 2*, is coming out on the Saturn before the end of the year. Do you know if there will be a PlayStation version?

Whatever happened to *Star Control*? The game was being



made, but there's no sign of it. Do you know any details because this game was excellent on the 3DO?

Dave Mills,
Swindon
dave@d.mills.demon.co.uk

1 The short, and indeed, correct answer is 'NO'. Sorry. Damned fine game, too.

2 *Star Control* also made an appearance on the PC. No announced plans for the PlayStation as yet, strangely.

How many tracks does *Monster Trucks* have? When is *Tekken 3* coming out? Is the Predator lightgun compatible with all games?

I heard that *Tekken 3* will be 4 player, and players can link together two PlayStations and have a 'tag-team' game. Is this true?

Andrew Jobes,
AJobes@dircon.co.uk

1 There are three sections to *Monster Trucks*: circuit racing, cross-country endurance (a bit like orienteering, only in a car) and car crushing.

2 Unfortunately it's been canned. It'll only be available for the Saturn. ONLY JOKING. You'll have to wait 'til next March.

3 No, no, no. It works with *Area 51* and *Die Hard Trilogy* but it won't be compatible with *Time Crisis*. You'll need the super or Namco gun for that.

4 Bit far fetched, that, we reckon. This option certainly hasn't been intimated as yet.

Will *Championship Manager 2* be arriving on the PlayStation?

Is *Premier Manager 98* that good? Where is *Syndicate Wars*?

Is *Elite* or *Frontier Elite* coming out on the PlayStation?

Do you have a Web page and, if so, where?

Paul Mann,
p1mc@hotmail.com

1 There will be a *Championship Manager* at some distant point in time. The coders are still struggling manfully with the logistics of console gamers not having a keyboard.

2 Dunno. We haven't played it. But look out for our Primal Screen shortly.

3 It's in the shops as we put type to monitor.

4 Not a hope of either arriving in this galaxy.

5 We do indeed. You'll have to log onto the fabulous FutureNet by tapping in <http://www.futurenet.co.uk> and you can now access a slew of

Future Publishing's magazines. The only trouble is, you might find yourself reading a preview we wrote three months ago. And don't try this at home on your PlayStation. It'll explode.

In mission two of *The City of Lost Children*, the headmistress asks me to go to the Loan Shark's house. However when I use the small bell in front of the

As yet there are no plans to release *Tobal 2* but we're pushing Mr Sony against the bikesheds and stealing his pocket money...

watchman in the dock he just feels hurt and doesn't go away. Then I can't go upstairs. What have I forgotten to do?

Eric Tam,
general@hkstar.com

Have you picked up the sponge on the backboard and the bag of marbles from the shelves before leaving the classroom? Did you fill up the two empty bottles to get Peade drunk? Just a couple of hints.

My friend's PlayStation jumps with most games but when he puts it on a pillow upside down it doesn't jump at all. Why is this, can it be fixed and is it safe to use the PlayStation like this?

Is it true that *Tobal 2* will not get a UK release?

Tony Bird,
Lancashire

1 It's just one of those things. Temperamental. Little bequarks at times. It's safe to use like this, which is the saving grace.

2 Sadly, at this moment there seems to be no

release planned for *Tobal 2* in this country. It's a fine game, too. But we're pushing Mr Sony against the bike sheds and stealing his dinner money. He'll accede to our wishes.

Is there any more news on *Rapid Racer*? Also, are there any more V-

CDs around as my mates and I rather like them?

D J Mead,
Bridgewater

1 Yep, it's due for release next in the coming weeks and shaping up nicely. Hey, check out the demo CD with this very tome, it should give you an idea what to expect.

2 We're pretty keen on them too. For those not in the know,

V-CDs produce bouncy graphic magery. You load it into the PlayStation and then swap it for an audio CD. We'd love to get a new one. We're on the case.

How can I obtain Alex and Roger on *Tekken 2*?

Where can I find information with the bosses' combos and special moves in *Tekken 2*?

J Edney,
Aylesbury

1 Um, damned tricky. Select a fighter in Arcade and finish off your first two opponents. In the third round finish with the commentator shouting 'Great' - don't knock them out until your energy is almost gone. Roger or Alex will be your next opponent. Finish the game and a pair of boxing gloves appears on the character select screen. Press kick for Alex or punch for Roger.

2 Check out issue 12 of our sister magazine *PlayStation Power* for a fine tips book on *Tekken 2*.

I recently dropped my PlayStation on and cracked the top half of the case. Do you know where I can get a replacement case and how much will it cost?

Andrew Ogram,
Northampton

Phone Sony on 0171-447 1600.

In *Broken Sword* how do you get Nejo to take the red ball in *Sydney*? We have tried the hot line and followed the instructions to the letter but to no avail.

Mrs J Wyatt,
Hailsham

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PrePlay NHL Powerplay '98

Powerplay and the glory

Virgin return with more authentic ice hockey action, only this time round they're playing dirty...

[1] Can't beat them at cricket in real life, can't beat them at ice-hockey on the PlayStation.
[2] The Boston Bruins celebrate an early strike against LA. [3] It's the Australians again. 3-0.



Uice hockey fans prepare for the new season NHL Powerplay '98 is set to be released early this autumn, hopefully by September, when the real pucks will start flying again all around America and anywhere else where it gets cold enough to play the game. This Virgin sequel promises more 'life-like hockey action than ever before' through motion-captured animation and a wide range of moves that simulate pretty much anything a player might want to try, especially when it comes to roughing up the other team.

You can fake shots, skate backwards, deliberately foul and body check, and although we haven't actually managed to start a fight yet, we have clearly shown the opposition that we like to put ourselves about a bit on the ice. However, Virgin stress that the more aggressive elements of ice hockey will be emphasised, with a plethora of

ways in which to rough up your opponents. There will also be a choice of powerplay strategies with which to press home any advantage you might make from roughing up your opponents well enough to provoke them into a sin-bin offence. Our pre-press copy also demonstrated 3D flybys, tension-lifting organ music, biased commentators and a very crowd - though they didn't all pile down to the opposition's sin-bin and start banging on the plastic walls in an attempt to intimidate the occupants, unfortunately.

All current NHLPA members are included with updated stats, and these can be tracked over the season. There will also be an eight player option which might be what brings out the best in the game.

It will take us a lot more

practice to control the players' moves and passes. Still, the first game saw our team romp home by a 4-2 margin and we hadn't even figured out the buttons - in fact, it took us the first period to work out which team we were supposed to be controlling. But any sports sim boasting as many features as this will take some time to pick up. Let's just hope that when we do get the hang of it, we're not thrashing the computer hopelessly out of sight every time with our dummies and fakes, and generally graceful skating, as our players glide to effortless victory after effortless victory...



[1] Stumpel goes down for the puck. [2] This is a good looking hockey simulation. [3] The Brits are gutted.

■ PUBLISHER:	Virgin Interactive Ent.	■ RELEASE DATE:	September	■ PLAYERS:	One to eight
■ DEVELOPER:	In-house	■ ORIGIN:	United States	■ STYLE:	Sports sim



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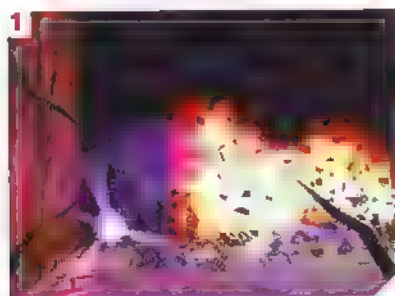


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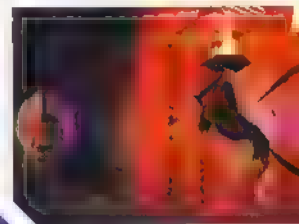
PrePlay | Shadow Master



Bar *Epidemic*, there's been a distinct lack of decent *Doom* clones in recent months. Enter Psygnosis' new labyrinthian adventure...



(1) *SM* features some of the finest explosions this side of *Desert Storm*. (2) It might look like a huge, disgusting alien but this is actually one of the smaller baddies! (3) Your head-up display lets you know exactly where things are and how close they are.



How much a sci-fi game can hold your interest will often depend on whether it has an enemy worth giving a good slap in the chops, and developers HammerHead have succeeded in creating a real mother funster. Meet the eponymous *Shadow Master*, an all-powerful pan-galactic dictator with a penchant for turning his conquered rifeforms into semi-robotic meta-cybernaths. He's been waging war against anyone who gets in his way for thousands of years, and at this fighting has taken a toll on his

resources. He sends his army to enslave your planet and (what a surprise) you're the poor schmuck who's given the task of stopping him. At any cost. After ridding his forces from your homeworld in sensational style, you're seen as a hero and are duly entrusted with the job of ridding the whole galaxy of the Master menace. Okay, so the plot doesn't sound the most original we've ever heard, but we'll forgive them on this occasion.

With a game like this it's very easy to fall into the trap of developing just another *Doom* clone. You know the type - loads of levels to explore while fending off hundreds of armour-clad

enemies. After a while it seems like it's only the texture maps that change and the whole thing becomes tedious y duh. Fortunately, *Shadow Master* manages to avoid becoming the eternal bore, the most obvious difference being your method of control: instead of running round with only a sheath of armour pinned to your chest, you've been given the best buggy your planet could find (don't mock - it's a nifty little piece of machinery). Indeed there are several

Shadow Master manages to avoid becoming the eternal bore, the most obvious difference being your method of control



■ PUBLISHER:	Psygnosis	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ DEVELOPER:	HammerHead	■ STYLE:	First-person blaster
■ RELEASE DATE:	November	■ PLAYERS:	One



(1) Yet more fantastic explosions. (2) These look like storm troopers from *Star Wars* but no doubt they're better shots. (3) Each level is set in very different terrains - here's the ice planet. (4) Look at the size of this mammoth. He's huge!

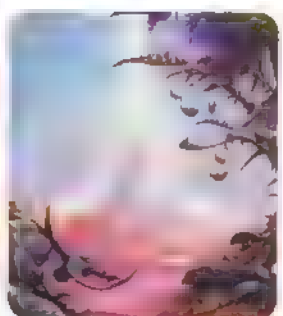


give a terrific sense of size and scale.' The graphics are complex not to mention impressive, with the enemies being made up of polygons rather than sprites. Each enemy is made up of at least 170 polygons, with some of the larger beasts consisting of up to 400. Normally this would be a kiss of death, condemning you to a painfully slow game with few enemies, but somehow the programmers have kept up the speed (30fps) even with six or eight enemies flying around the screen, all firing light sourced weapons at you. When you succeed in destroying an enemy, it explodes in a shower of its component polygons. Very smart.

The sound, too, has been worked on - it's a nasty enough experience when the spiders are crawling towards you, but when you can hear them scratching and cackling, well, let's just say it's certainly not a game for arachnophobes...



Rodney Matthews



For people with suspect taste in music this bloke's name will need no introduction, but for those of us who have forgone the lyrical delights of The Scorpions, Barclay James Harvest and Nazareth, Rodney Matthews' work might have escaped you.

A graduate of the West of England College of Art, in Bristol, Rodney made his name with his imaginative science fiction and fantasy art work. Since starting out, he's illustrated more than 70 record covers, has sold original art work to the likes of John Cleese and Terry Jones, and has sold more than three million posters and postcards of his drawings. Recently his work has taken a more technical slant with the release of his first CD-Rom, *Between Earth and the End of Time*. As well as working with HammerHead on *Shadow Master*, Matthews is working on a fantasy cartoon with Gerry Anderson and Rick Wakeman, *The Lavender Cast*.

ways in which developers HammerHead have attempted to differentiate *Shadow Master* from all the other *Doom* moulds.

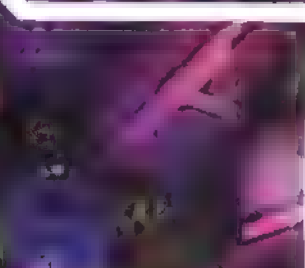
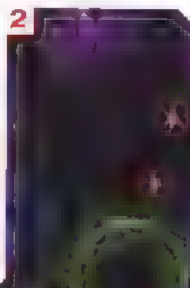
For a start, rather than just roiling around each planet, blasting everything in sight, the game has several different missions to complete. Each level has three objectives which can be completed in any order. For instance, in one level you could be sent to destroy a nuclear reactor, while the next one could see you protecting a planet's natural resources from the *Shadow Master's* troops. The best example from the 16 levels comes in the Dreadnought stage, when the commander of the craft, sick of all the trouble you've created, finds a buggy to take you and hunts you down.

Full-on action

Also, unlike games like *Quake* and *Doom*, which often involve lots of exploring and just the occasional shooting as you work your way to the end of a level, *Shadow Master* opts for an all-out action approach. Programmer Chris Stanforth explains: 'The

levels aren't linear but at the same time they're not designed to impede the player very much. Any disorientation is basically due to their size - in *Shadow Master* you know there'll be something nasty lurking around the next corner. In this respect, the game's more like *R-Type* than *Quake*.

The HammerHead team have also given *Shadow Master* a very distinctive appearance, enlisting the pen skills of world-famous fantasy artist Rodney Matthews instead of using the popular Manga look. 'Because of the Rodney Matthews licence we have a very strong visual style, allowing us to create some truly beautiful levels,' says artist Andy Ingram. 'We don't restrict the terrain to just corridors and tunnels but often open out into wide panoramic spaces which



When the enemies explode, they do so in style. (2) Some of the very frightening spiders. (3) They stay this in the dark. (4) They're just like *Alien*, only harder.

WE COULD BE THE HEROES...

At a time when **super heroes** seem to be the big thing, do gamers really want to play an **old-style 2D scrolling beat 'em up**? Probe seem to think so



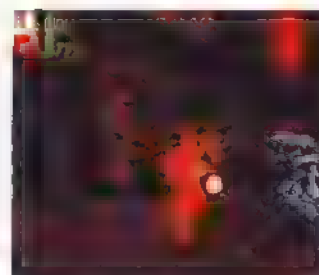
Let's face it, super hero games tend to be pretty uninspiring on the whole. You only have to look at the likes of the appalling *Incredible Hulk* and even poorer *Iron Man* to see what we mean. Given this feeble track record, it's a wonder that *Marvel* comics allowed anyone to get their hands on the *Fantastic Four* licence; but then Probe did make the splendid movie-licensed *Die Hard Trilogy* and *Alien Trilogy*. Can they turn their talents to *Marvel's* super heroes, though?

Although most people can't recall all the characters of the

Fantastic Four, the very name is enough to send most of us twentysomethings into a haze of nostalgia as we recall Saturday mornings spent watching *FF* cartoons, rallying the four freaks as they battled against the forces of Evil.

Each section of the game takes its plot from the original *Fantastic Four* comics, with the first level echoing the group's very first adventure in print, *The Attack of the Molemen*. Enemies you'll face later in the game include Psychoman, Super Skrull and the marvellous Dr Doom.

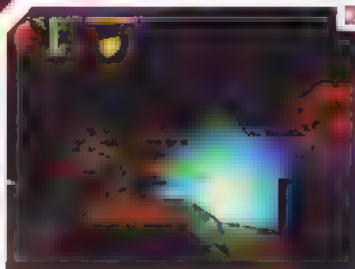
All of the main characters have a variety of moves, ranging from the basic punch to super ground smashes that destroy everything on screen. Our favourite character is The Thing. Transformed into a lump of stone by a freak accident, Ben Grimm has devoted his life to using his superhuman strength to help people. His special moves include



XXX The Human Torch has a great range of special moves. **(2)** FF has smart Namco-style loading game



(1) Homer always wanted to run his own bar. **(2)** This move works a treat when you've got a lot of enemies close to you. **(3)** Regeneration kills everything close



a thunder clap, floor ripple and a super charge, but best of all is his great back fist which, when timed right, can crumple a little moleoid in a flash. In contrast, the enemies are truly uninspiring, ranging from little mole bitches to nasty green haired freaks. As a nice touch, though, each enemy has their own energy bar, allowing you to keep tabs on how many shots they'll take before they collapse into a heap and fade away.

It's when you play as the Human Torch, however, that the game engine's limitations start to appear, as the character floats unconvincingly across the screen, apparently unable to move in and out of it. Also, while *FF* has lots of neat graphical touches, it's clear that Probe are struggling to make this game anything more than just a bland scrolling fight fest. Hopefully they'll achieve that aim in the finished version.



PUBLISHER:

Acclaim

RELEASE DATE:

October

PLAYERS

Four (via MultiTap)

DEVELOPER:

Probe

ORIGIN:

UK

STYLE:

Scrolling beat 'em up

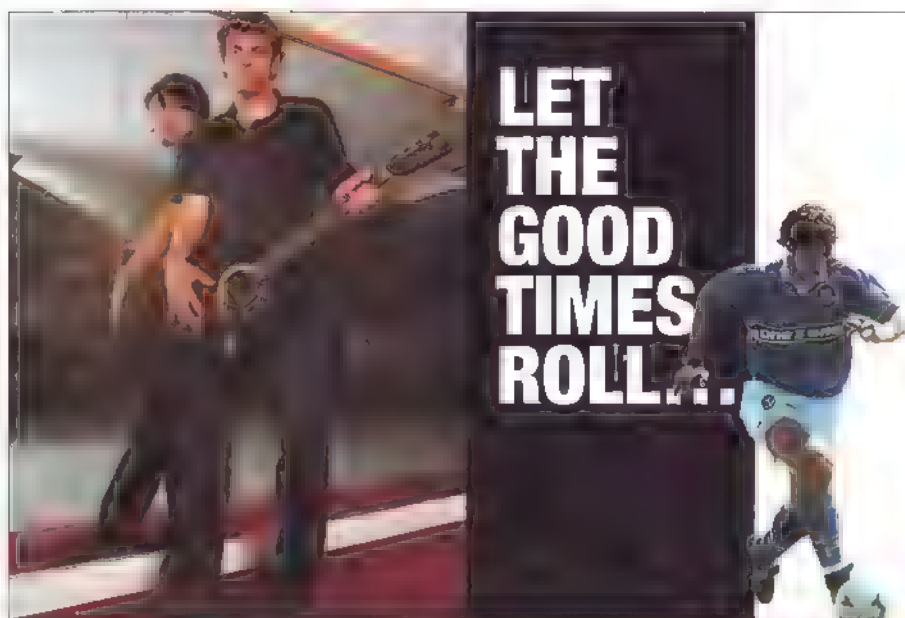
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PrePlay | Breakaway '98

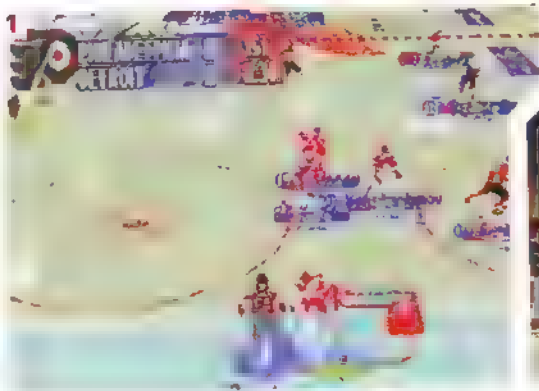
Slip Slidin' Away

Whether you want to mastermind **NHL success**, or get down there on the ice, the ultimate ice-hockey game could be seeing in the new season...

Serious attempts are being made with *Breakaway '98* to create an ice hockey game which includes every conceivable option that serious fans could want. Whether these options will make the title better than any of its rivals remains to be seen, but there certainly seems to be nothing lacking.

The player rosters are up to date as far as the end of last season, and the ability to trade players means that you can keep up to date with real-life changes as the season develops. There's also an option to customise up to eight of your own players. You'll have to trade for these as they appear on the free agents list, but once you've done this, you can use the eight player mode to put yourself down there on the ice alongside all your mates.

Offensive strategy consists of either carrying the puck over the shooting line - for which you'll need skilful, passing players - or 'dump and chase', where your players send the puck into the



(1) There is an option to display all the players' names - one for the fan boys. (2) The players look even better during the match.



corners for your big bruisers to chase. Your defensive options are as follows: to send one or two forecheckers up into your opponents' zone, making it difficult for them to build a play from the back, the 'trap', which cuts off passing possibilities, the 'back check', where your players will retreat at the first sign of a turnover; and the 'defensive pinch', a pressing game where you try to restrict the action to your opponents' zone.

Hook 'n' hold

Players will also hook and hold, and get away with it, too, providing the ref isn't looking. It's even possible for your players to lose their sticks during play. The player will be able to continue skating, checking, blocking and holding until such time as they can retrieve their stick by skating over it. And, of course, any ice hockey sim worth

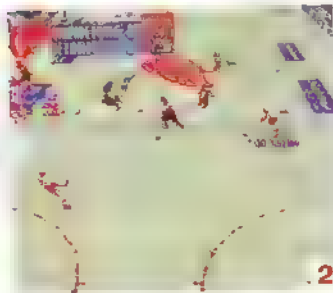
its salt will allow for the occasional fight to break out. As a responsible manager, you obviously won't condone such shenanigans, but tempers do fray out there on the ice and each punch that connects will reduce your opponents' energy levels. Should any, or all, of these strategies fail you, however, you can resort to the option of switching sides and playing for the winning team.

But not only can you compete as a player, you can take the role of player manager too, or sit back as manager and let the computer take care of the playing

You can customise your own players... then use eight player mode to put yourself on the ice with your mates



(1) Timing is everything in winning the face-off. (2) All rule options, offsides and icings are available.



■ PUBLISHER:	Acclaim	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ DEVELOPER:	Sculptured Software	■ STYLE:	Sports sim
■ RELEASE DATE:	October	■ PLAYERS:	One to eight

side while you play the game as a sports management simulation. Extensive management options will allow you to deal with trading players and hiring the coaches that will improve your players' performances.

As manager, though, you'll not only have to take responsibility for your players, but also for your coaches, your minor league scouting and the strategies your team will play. You can also look after your injured players and select the treatment they'll be receiving. There will even be an option to administer first aid for minor injuries incurred during the course of a match.

All the statto options are here, too – with NHL rosters through which you buy, sell players and make call-ups from the minor leagues and keep track of your own records. Then, as the tree of your tactical genius begins to bear fruit, results will improve, attendances will rise and you'll need to upgrade your stadium.

This isn't an easy game to pick up (a good sign) and it might take you a few games before you score your first goal,



(1) The introductory video takes you through all the recent NHL championship winners. (2) Scuffles for the puck are not as confusing as they look here.



but the practice and shoot-out options will teach you what controls do what more quickly than you'll learn them through match-play. Perhaps we're just not very good at it yet, but it does look like some work needs to be done on the graphics to avoid in-play confusion. This problem is alleviated by the visible trail the puck leaves in its wake, making it easier to track its movements. But if that isn't enough, you can switch on 'fire puck' to make the puck glow. We're still not entirely convinced that this is the best way to deal with the problem but

there is still time for last-minute improvements to be made.

Still, with the emphasis on realism and options, *Breakaway '98* promises to prove more than adequate both as an ice-hockey game and a management sim. And it looks like even the most ardent fan won't be disappointed by the depth of gameplay offered here.



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CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

BMG

PrePlay One



One is swiftly reminded of an important lesson in this up-and-coming shoot 'em up: discretion is the greater part of valour...

[1] One is an offering from ASC Games who're based in the United States. [2] There's lots of ledge hopper to contend with, even on sheer cliff faces. [3] The action's viewed from above.



One is not merely a shoot 'em up but a chase, and there's more running away than some of you gung ho heroes out there may be used to. But hey, we won't tell anyone, and besides, one of the most impressive features of this game is precisely the array of running away skills at your disposal. Lara Croft you are not, but Bruce Willis maybe. As well as being able to shoot, you can crouch, jump and flip in mid air; you can catch a ledge with your hands and hang there before hauling yourself up; and, of course, generally run around dodging the hail of hell fire and falling masonry. Not so bad, eh?

The whole game has the feel, if not quite the look, of a movie. This is partly because of the way the camera follows you along your precarious, not to say deadly, route. One moment there's a side-on view of you running along exploding, collapsing gantries; the next, as you move along, the camera shifts smoothly round so that you find yourself running towards and then past it. This isn't off putting, as you

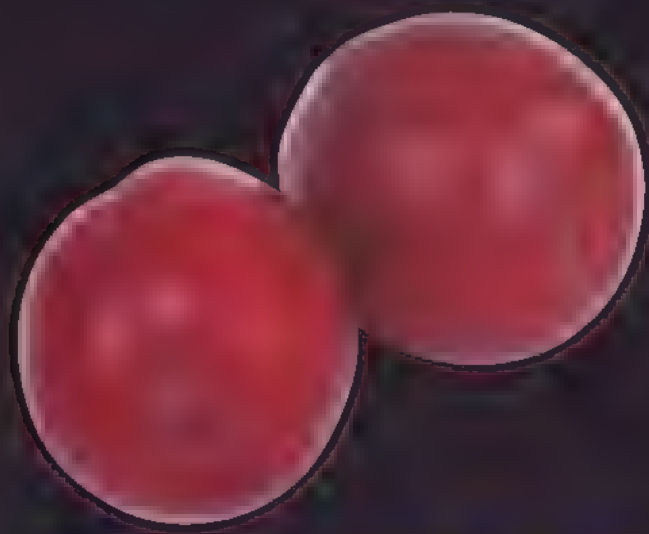
might think, rather it only adds to the action and gives you a sense of being there, in with the action. Nor does it mean that you are forced along by the game itself. Far from it. You can back-track if you want, but the name of this game is survival and that means you must keep moving.

One is certainly a little bit different, and it's no picnic. It'll be interesting to see if the whole thing hangs together when it's finally released. Stay tuned

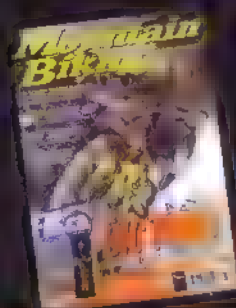


[1] The game is reminiscent of a movie, particularly in the way the camera constantly shifts to keep up with the action. [2] You play the role of a Die Hard-esque hero.

■ PUBLISHER:	TBC	■ RELEASE DATE:	November	■ PLAYERS:	One, One
■ DEVELOPER:	ASC Games	■ ORIGIN:	United States	■ STYLE:	Shoot 'em up



MBUK grabs ya...



...hard!

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PrePlay Rosco McQueen



He's the **First Man on the Scene** when it comes to tackling blazes.

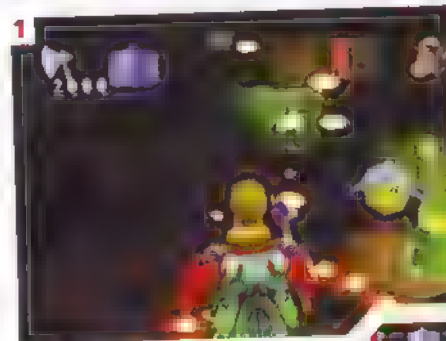
London might be burning but Rosco's got the world's tallest building to deal with in this first PlayStation title from Slippery Snake Studios...



Extinguishing things aflame is not something many computer game protagonists have had to deal with. Most of the time, they're wont to hop aboard platforms, jump on the heads of nasty little things, shoot off rounds with brazen disregard for public safety, and buzz around in all manner of motorised vehicles. Most of the time... However, the games player is open of mind and hardy of soul. Firefighting? Naught to it, sir. We'll tackle blazes with the best of 'em.

Steve McQueen is terribly popular at the moment, isn't he? Resurrected and running a nice little Ford Puma, he would seem to be one of the inspirations for

(1) Take an axe to the filing cabinets, then collect the pick-ups. **(2)** The red hooter (right) flashes when you can leave the level. **(3)** A pensive Rosco. **(4)** Water pick-ups are essential.



(1) Save the folk who're trapped and they're beamed up. **(2)** The view upon entering the game. **(3)** Look left, Rosco, save the vulnerable, then collect the water.

the reason we're here: *Rosco McQueen*. You work it out. A firefighter in a huge skyscraper with the surname McQueen... *Towering Inferno*, mate. Bang-on. But on a computer.

Sneakily, we'll let you know it's a polygonal 3D action platform game and then forward the salient details of the plot. Tower XS is the world's skyscrapiest skyscraper. It's huge. And everything inside the big

devil is fully automated, robots scuttling about the shop and everything. The aforementioned mechanics do all the work around the building, cleaning, repairing and such like. A chap called Sylvester T Square, the builder of the grand edifice, has for the purposes of the computer

Rosco meets a welter of hazards, including backdrafts and electrical fires. There's the robots...

■ PUBLISHER:	SCEE	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ DEVELOPER:	Slippery Snake Studio	■ STYLE:	Platform/action
■ RELEASE DATE:	September	■ PLAYERS:	One



The introductory rendered sequence lasts but half a minute but you see ships flying toward the Tower X skyscraper and then Rosco McQueen speeds up in a quite delightful red, open-topped sports car. He grins (in a suitably butch manner) and hops into the building which is busily burning itself to the ground.



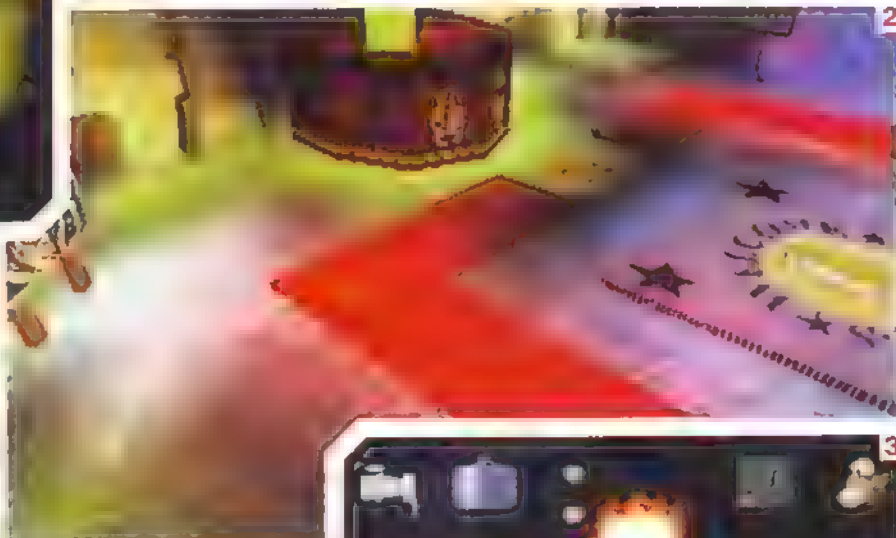
game, decided to go completely doo ally. Bonkers, barmy, hatstand. The robots have programmed to destroy the place and they're prodigious little firestarters.

Enter yer man McQueen, equipped with hosepipe and axe and it's game on! The action is viewed in the above and behind perspective (there are three slight variations) and Rosco's job is to take the robots to task while extinguishing flames. Busy lad. We took an early look at the game, some months ago, and managed to misspell the poor fellow's Christian name. Sorry, Rosco.

We're returning to the scene of the fire because publishers SCEE have supplied us with a part-finished playable version.

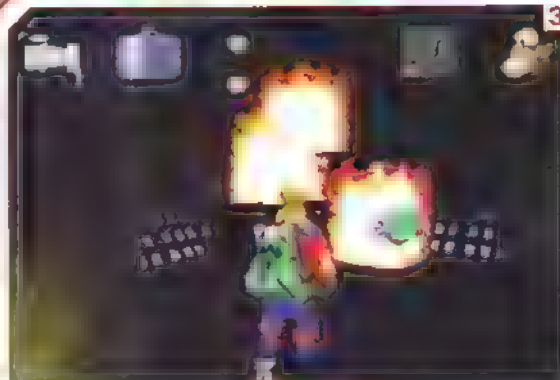
Rosco McQueen has some 15 levels, all set on different floors of the skyscraper. Levels include

the laundry, gym, car park, superstore and residential floor and on his travels, Rosco comes up against a welter of hazards, including backdrafts and electrical fires. Apart from the fires themselves, there's all the bithering robots to deal with. But help is at hand. Rosco has a little pal called Lucky Digit, a little robot himself who hovers along passing helpful tips – such as where the fires are and what to do if you're desperate for the toilet and there isn't one around. The hose is Rosco's initial weapon along with an axe, the latter used for batting down doors. To get the building under control, though, Rosco needs additions to the armoury, including water bombs (yee hee) and CO₂.



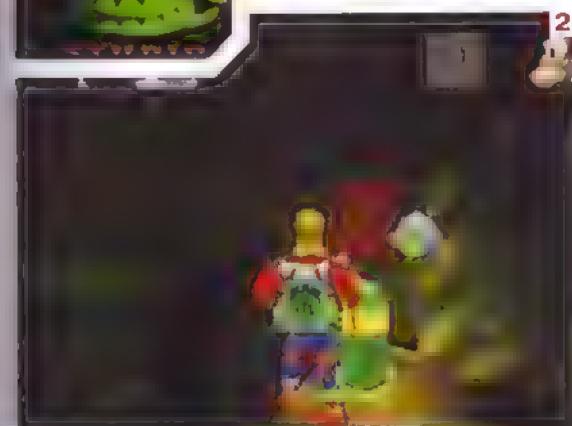
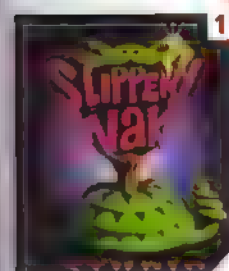
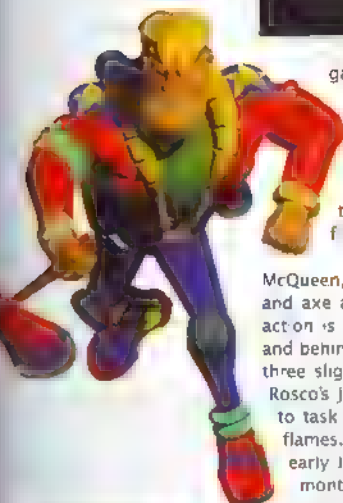
One of the problems that gamers find with the viewed-from-behind 3D titles is old camera tummy – that queasy feeling you get when the camera whooshes around inexplicably. Programmers Slippery Snake Studios reckon they've come up with a cunning answer: by surreptitiously placing objects along walls, Rosco can never actually stand adjacent to a wall, thus significantly reducing camera-angle tomfoery and the inherent stomach problems.

Having indulged in some firefighting, we can report that Rosco is blazing a long nice y. Visually, it's crisp and colourful and there's some low-down funky incidental music to slay the flames to. The finished copy will be on the mat in days and we'll run the rule over it next month. Check out the video on the demo CD – it shows you pretty much the idea of what we're on about here, and look out for a playable demo in the not-too-distant future.



Slippery Snake have come up with a cunning solution to the 'camera tummy' experienced in viewed-from-behind 3D games.

Having indulged in some firefighting, we can report that Rosco is blazing a long nice y. Visually, it's crisp and colourful and there's some low-down funky incidental music to slay the flames to. The finished copy will be on the mat in days and we'll run the rule over it next month. Check out the video on the demo CD – it shows you pretty much the idea of what we're on about here, and look out for a playable demo in the not-too-distant future.

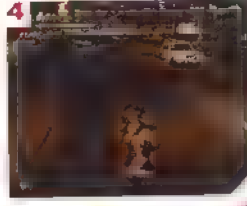
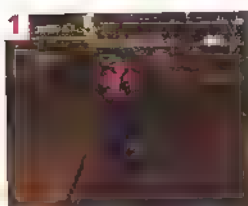


Rosco McQueen is Slippery Snake's first ever PlayStation game and we reckon it's shaping up mighty fine. (2) When the red box flashes, exit the level and move on.

PrePlay | Fighting Force



Taking its influence from arcade classics such as *Double Dragon* and *Streets Of Rage*, Core's new 3D beat 'em up/adventure prepares to coin it



(1, 2, 3, 4) As you can see, it's not just male characters who have a natty rap. (5) You can pick up all sorts of weapons, ranging from small pistols to rocket launchers. (6) The lift level.

No PlayStation fighting game would be complete without a story detailing how a genocidal maniac is planning to take over/destroy the world, and *Fighting Force* is no exception. Dr Zeng (why are they always doctors?), believing he's the manifestation of the Second Coming, is certain that the Armageddon (as predicted by the world's top wackos) will destroy the world on January 31, 1999. But when the world survives to celebrate the new millennium, the Doctor's cult take it upon themselves to destroy the world and plan to poison everybody with a drug designed to turn people into gibbering cry babies



as they slowly asphyxiate on their own vomit.

Luckily Dr Zeng's fiendish schemes are exposed by a secret agent called Snapper, who passes the information on to her private investigator pal, Mace Daniels. Mace duly rallies the support of the 'Fighting Force' - ex-freedom fighter Hawk Manson, teeny-bop



raver Alana McKendrick and convict Ben (Smasher) Jackson - to fight for the security of the world. Each character has his/her own biography - so, for example, Ben Jackson is serving multiple life sentences in a notorious prison when Hawk Manson bribes the guards to 'borrow' his muscular mate for their mission.

To anyone who visited arcades in the Eighties, the heritage of *Fighting Force* will be instantly apparent: the game plays like a cross between *Double Dragon* and *Streets Of Rage* as you run round, searching for clues, while battering people senseless. Comparing the game with



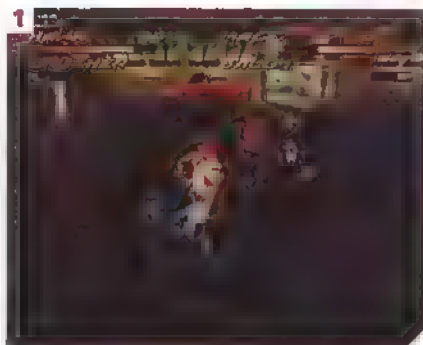
(1) More bird-on-bloke action. (2) Smasher is so strong, he can throw people out of the screen. (3) Mace performs one of her special moves to get rid of two blokes in one go.

■ PUBLISHER	Eidos Interactive	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ DEVELOPER	Core Design	■ STYLE:	Scrolling 3D beat 'em up
■ RELEASE DATE:	October	■ PLAYERS:	One or two

contemporary PlayStation titles like *Tekken 2* and *Die Hard*, producer **Ken Hockley** says: 'We think we're getting an even better game on all counts. It certainly doesn't hamper the action, as there's a great deal more going on in *Fighting Force* than in *Tekken* or *Die Hard*. The fighting's probably not as clean as in *Tekken*, but it still has an edge, with its varied array of moves'.

Each character has been given more than 40 basic moves, ranging from a tasty backfist to a huge axe kick. They don't have 'special powers' as such but they do have some spectacular assaults, such as the spinning scissor kick. And instead of the confusing combos of games like *Street Fighter* or *Mortal Kombat*, the moves are based around single and multiple taps of the pad. The developers have tried to keep the control as simple as possible, as quite often you'll find yourself going up against five or six enemies at the same time.

If you prefer some pure beat 'em up action you can bypass the adventure section of the game



1 Core have been very generous when it comes to the blood levels. **(2, 3)** The two player mode makes it a little easier when a lot of enemies appear at once.



and opt for the arena mode. With only four fighters, the arena section doesn't fare particularly well when compared to games like *Tekken 2* and *Street Fighter EX*, both of which have up to 25 characters. But there are plenty of other touches which make this aspect of the game much more than just an after-thought. For example, your energy bar regains lost energy if you avoid being hit for a short time, and you can find hidden weaponry (anything from a little crowbar to guns and knives) in the eight arenas, giving the one-on-one fighting section an interesting touch.

Scenery interaction

A lot of work has gone into the physics of weapons – if you fire the pistol from a distance, for example, it might take three shots to kill a biker, but if he's very close it only needs one shot in the head to execute the muddy funster. Pretty much every object you see in the game can be used as a weapon at some point – destroy a car and you can chuck the tyres at the bad guys. One of the best examples of this 'scenery as weapon' idea is the elevator section, where a well-placed kick to the handrail will knock it to the floor, so you can pick it up and use it on any unfortunate bad guy who gets in the way.

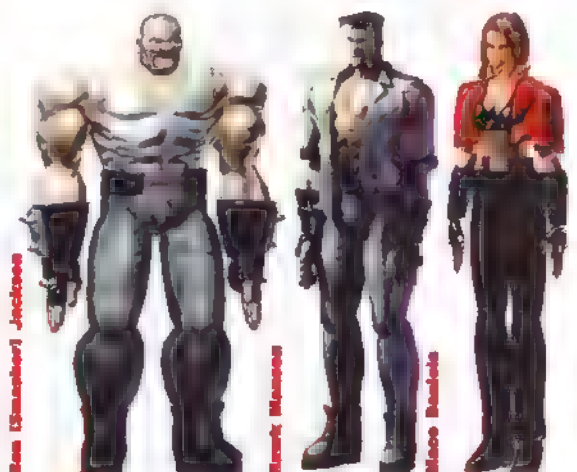
As well as acting as weapons, the scenery can also be used to progress through each level. Ken Hockley again: 'It isn't essential to find things, but in certain areas it'll help you a great deal. You could be stuck in one place for five minutes, but if you had a device like the rocket launcher, it may only take a minute!'

The action is spread over eight levels, with each one split into 25 sub-levels ranging from offices and trains, to a naval base and, for the final showdown, a secret desert is and.

We're expecting a final copy any day now – until then we're off to practise.

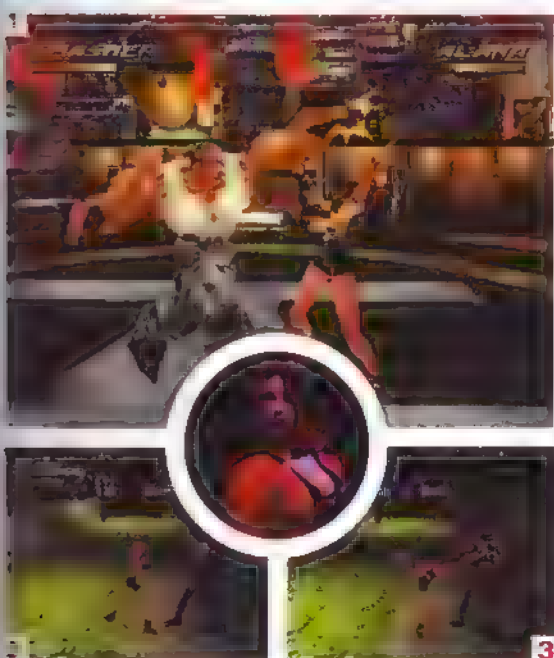


Meet the Force



When Snapper gets in touch with her mate and private eye Mace Daniels, she decides to take up the challenge and sees it as an opportunity to get some of the things she loves most – danger, fame, fortune and men. To help her, she contacts hippie-turned-mercenary Hawk Manson. He has a lot of other 'work' but takes on this assignment because it's the first job he's had in a while with a hint of 'goodness'. Hawk then heads to one of the world's most dangerous prisons to find Ben (Smasher) Jackson. Ben's serving multiple life sentences and the prison is very fond of him. For years they've been hiring him out to mercenaries looking to use his super-human strength, their number one client being Hawk Manson. But this is Ben's final time as a rental rambo – this time he's never going back. The final piece of the jigsaw is completed when Mace approaches 17-year-old raver Alana McKendrick who Dr Zeng once targeted as the ideal mother for his children. Once together the group make a formidable Fighting Force...

Pretty much every object you see in the game can be used as a weapon at some point...



3 The arena fighting area is great for practising your special moves and beating seven shades of sugar out of your friends. **(2, 3)** Alana has a nasty range of kicks, including this shot straight to the bad guy's head.

PrePlay Hardcore 2



Just as some of us were becoming bored with endless circuit and road racers involving (whisper it) cars, suddenly we were off the straight and narrow and driving pick-up trucks. It couldn't happen again, could it?

Oh yes it could. And why not? *Hardcore 4x4* was never the sleekest racing game ever invented but *hardcore* it certainly was: it literally spat gravel, in fact. While its flash but puny contemporaries came to a juddering, shuddering halt whenever they put so much as a wheel off the road, the monster trucks of *Hardcore* bitely flattened or rolled over anything in their path. Get the picture? Well, sit on this mother-trucker: *Hardcore 2* is on its way.

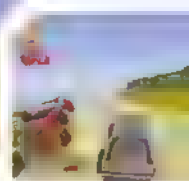
But seriously, the joy of trucking with *Hardcore* is not

to be sniffed at, despite some flaws which may not have been ironed-out in this second version (like poor commentary and copy graphics). It gives you hardcore action, splendid views and, best of all, a great ride. What more could you want?

One of the trickiest problems that any racing-game developer must overcome is giving the player at least a little of the idea that they really are 'driving' a vehicle. The term 'driving' in itself means little because it involves many things – like steering at high and low speed, the feel of the vehicle's hold upon the road,



The backgrounds are brighter and less pixelated than in the original but also less detailed.

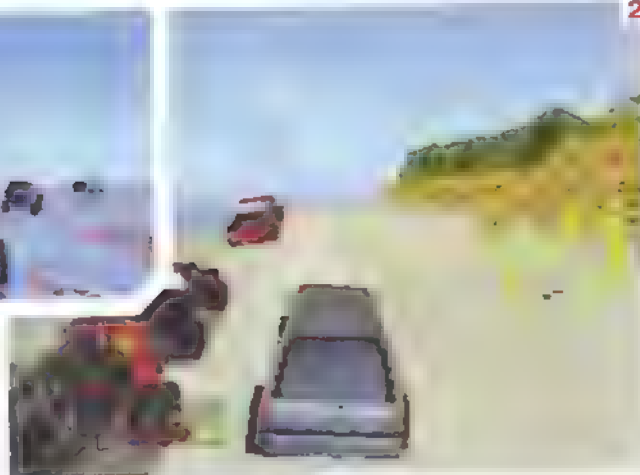


the suspension, the ride. It's a problem that even good games like *Formula 1* haven't completely got to grips with yet. But some games conquer some aspects of driving better than others, and with this one – and you would hope so, too, it being an off-roader – it's the suspension that's captured beautifully.

Going across and over inclines, crunching over boulders and hills – whatever the terrain, the trucks seem to move over it extremely realistically. You don't just tear round these courses, you rock and roll round them, making this game not only an adherent to the laws of Newton but also tremendous fun. This second version looks pretty much like the first (PSM14, 7/10) but that isn't such a bad thing, and so we look forward to reviewing it when it's complete.



1 Now there's off-road and there's off-road, but this is getting silly. **2** This, on the other hand, isn't off-road whatsoever. From the sublime to the ridiculous in 4x4 entertainment.



■ PUBLISHER:	ASCII Games	■ RELEASE DATE:	January '98	■ PLAYERS:	One
■ DEVELOPER:	In-house	■ ORIGIN:	America	■ STYLE:	Driving sim

backissues

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Playing Games

Role up... for the medieval mystery four

· **Pointy-hat. Lord High Anorak. RPG-head.** Videogaming may have gained vital credibility in recent years, but that hasn't prevented a few jibes directed from within its divisions. Derided as they are, devotees of **Role Playing Games** and high adventure are at last seeing their favourite **monster-bashing pastime** represented on Sony's little grey cube of cool...

Early explorers

If your neighbours still have the curtains closed at noon on a sunny summer day, it can now mean one of three things. Whereas a quick blast on *Tekken 2* or *Wipeout 2097* can be instantly gratifying, with no poor reflection on their long-term charms, the Role Playing Game requires an investment of time and attention. To truly appreciate it, you'll need to set aside several hours – preferably a weekend – in which to spud out, follow the storyline and solve its puzzles without losing concentration.

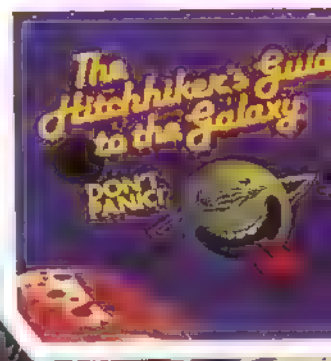
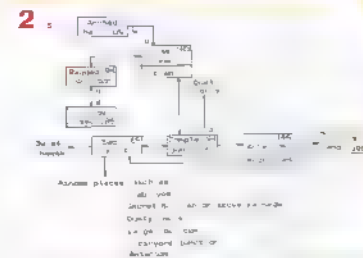
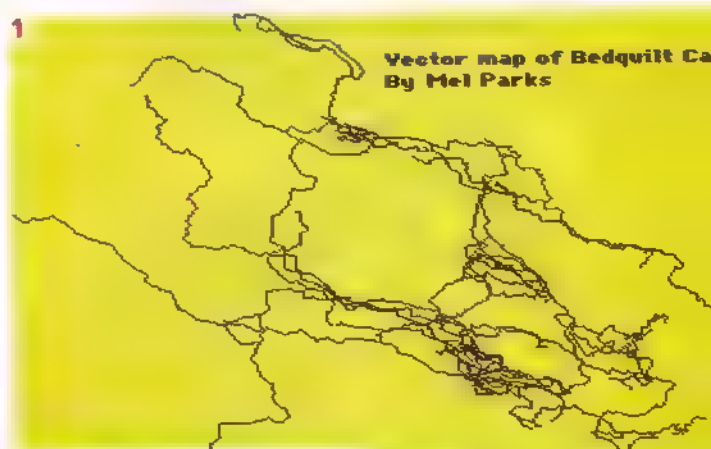
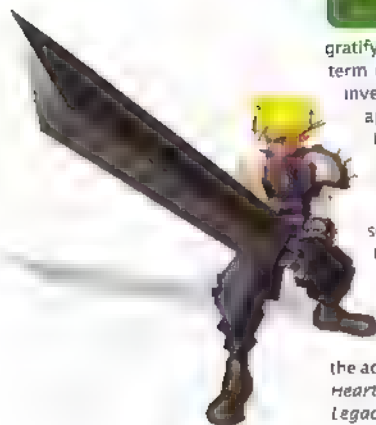
The flipside is that, having seen the end sequence, you probably won't be tempted to undertake more than one replay. That's an unhappy fact of most RPGs, especially when they have a high puzzle content, and might explain why the fans can't stop asking for more. But take a look at the actual solution times for recent efforts. *Vandal Hearts* would take you 20-35 hours to 'perfect', *Legacy Of Kain* was closer to 40 hours, while the forthcoming *Final Fantasy VII* promises around 110 hours before you reach the end of the last CD. That calls for a dedicated videogamer.

The PlayStation is the perfect medium for adventure gaming combining the storage capacity for enormous worlds and the ability to represent them with incredible visual detail. Read on as *PSM* celebrates a few old favourites, notes current developments, and reveals what you could be playing in the future...

Our story begins with *The Colossal Cave Adventure*. In 1972 an American programmer called William Crowther created a computer mapping tool to aid his other passion – cave exploring – which he used to produce layouts of Kentucky's subterranean Mammoth and Flint Ridge systems. Purely for his amusement, he then wrote a simulator in a maths-based computer language

(appearing under such names as *Colossal Adventure*, *Original Adventure*, or *Adventure*) were often slightly modified, but the core of the game continued to win fans for years to come.

The home computer boom of the early Eighties unearthed a whole new market for the format, and those who enjoyed it wanted more

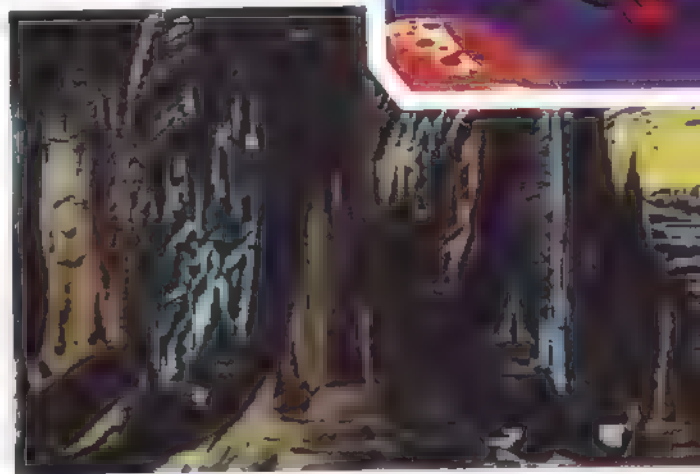


PlayStation is the perfect medium for adventure gaming, combining the storage capacity for enormous worlds and the ability to represent them with incredible detail

called FORTRAN that allowed the user to type in directions and thus move around an environment based on these maps.

The potential of Crowther's work was picked up by Don Woods, a researcher at Stanford University's Artificial Intelligence Lab, in 1976. A big fan of JRR Tolkien, Woods embellished the caver-sim with fantasy elements such as dwarves, elves, riddle-posing guardians and volcanic chasms of doom. As a computer game, it wasn't entirely original – an early effort called *Wumpus* had already seen UNIX proto-gamers negotiating the maze-lair of its mythical creature via text inputs – but the puzzles and detailed locations lent it a more cerebral edge and gave you the sense of being a wandering explorer.

Later conversions of Crowther & Woods' amalgamated code



[1] Back to basics: computer-aided mapping of cavern systems was the forerunner of (2) simulating a complex environment. (3) Imagine the text delivered the voice of Peter Jones and it almost worked... (4) Um, a cave. Obviously

Companies like Artic, Infocom and Level 9 were devoted to the publishing of new text adventures.

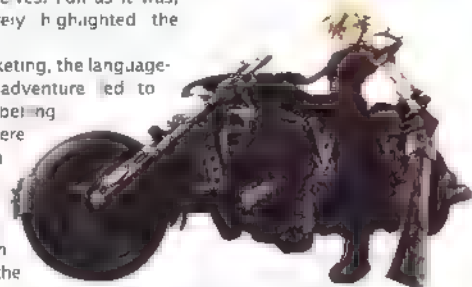
These new 8-bit processor machines boasted capabilities quite beyond a DEC-10 mainframe, however, and the adventure had begun its evolution in tandem. With *The Hobbit* (1982), Melbourne House was the first to combine a text window with graphic depictions of locations from Tolkien's Middle Earth, making it an instant best seller. The design skills of Scott Adams were so respected in adventure circles that he acquired one of the earliest licences, a *Marvel* tie-in based on 'The Hulk' which used comic-strip stills of Bruce Banner transforming. In doing so, Adams also established a regrettable precedent for

licences – it was truly awful.

But this was a time of experimentation and, thanks to the adventure, conceptions about Artificial Intelligence and virtual worlds were filtering through to computer game enthusiasts. The ZX Spectrum was host to Legend's *Vaihalla*, for instance, an ambitious attempt to people the game world with characters who would act independently of your immediate interactions.

Exploiting the advantages of computers over consoles, a company called Gisoft enjoyed a surprise hit with a software tool known as *The Quill*, essentially a DIY design kit, it allowed disappointed players with limited coding knowledge to prove that they could invent a decent adventure for themselves. Fun as it was, the formulaic results merely highlighted the existing limits of the genre.

Yet, despite this straitjacketing, the language-dependent nature of the adventure led to its rather pretentious labeling as 'interactive fiction': there was even critical opposition when illustrations were introduced, just as some still claim that radio can paint greater landscapes than television by drawing on the



Featuring decent puzzles, clever scripting and the finest range of insults and duelling taunts ever heard, *Monkey Island* was driven by a novel point-&-click interface

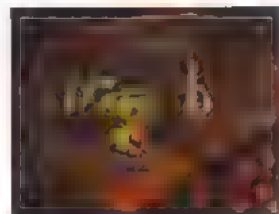
audiences' imagination. But trying to speak English to an 8-bit computer was also the adventure's biggest flaw, and few people had the patience for "I DON'T UNDERSTAND... YOU CAN'T DO THAT, USE ON WHAT?" messages. All too easily, the experience could be undermined by thoughtless design and ludicrously opaque riddles more at home on Ted Rogers' 3 1/2. Take Scott Adams' *Savage Island 2* (billed as 'tougher than *Savage Island*') where the player began the escapade in a deadly decompression chamber with just a few goes at entering the appropriate command. A messy demise and Game Over would follow if the player didn't guess at 'hyperventilate'.

As the emphasis on graphics took over, companies such as Ultimate Play The Game (later to become Rare Design) began to describe games like *Atic Atac* as 'graphic adventures', for the simple reason that they contained numerous single-screen locations, involved items you could manipulate, and, er, didn't play like anything you'd seen before. But while some might argue that *Fairlight* from The Edge was a forerunner of the action RPG, its sword-wobbling hero and multi-leveled castle had more in common with isometric puzzlers in the *Knight Lore* vein.

The arrival of 16-bit technology – notably the Amiga and ST for many Brits – promised much. For many avid fans, *The Secret of Monkey Island* (1991) was something of a breakthrough. Featuring a protagonist in less-than-heroic mould, decent puzzles, clever scripting and the finest range of insults and duelling taunts ever heard, *Monkey Island* was driven by a novel point-&-click interface. While many software publishers seem fixated on visual excellence, LucasArts ensured that their technical achievements were backed up by talented writers working with the designers to produce ►



1 Frustrated by CD load times? In the days of the Speccy, you could make a cuppa during *The Hobbit's* tape access. 2 Those good-natured inhabitants of *Monkey Island* extend the traditional welcome. 3 The division of RPG and adventure becomes trickier: how would you class *Resident Evil*, say?



Guybrush Threepwood gets a new LucasArts gloss in *Monkey Island 3*.

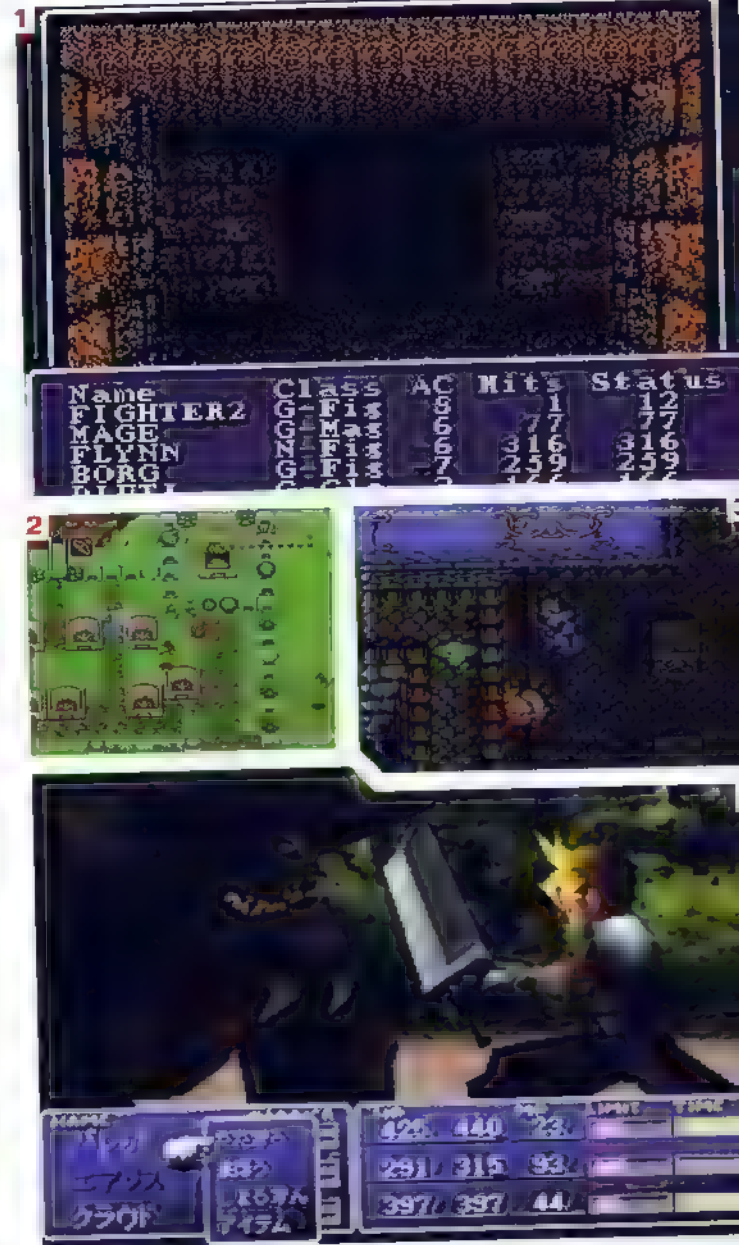
History Role Playing Games

► something memorable. Little has bettered it, and there are high hopes for the forthcoming *Monkey Island 3*. Indeed, it's often overlooked that Lucas had already made the leap in sophistication with their previous 8-bit title *Maniac Mansion*.

Console incongruity

Influences are less obvious when consoles enter the scene. Japanese audiences were familiar with Western fantasy games. *Wizardry* still has a small cult following there today – and the NES saw many early dungeon bashes in imitation Medieval fantasy was readily absorbed into their game culture, and not always of Japanese origin. But the coin-op softcos who turned to cartridge production soon

[1] We don't fancy *Fighter 2*'s chances in *Wizardry V*. [2] Little has bettered the toolled-up, multi-item combat and block-based puzzling of *Zelda III*, although Entix made some worthy attempts at action RPGs with *Soul Blazer* and [3] *The Illusion Of Gaia* (UK: *Illusion Of Time*). [4] Sumptuous as it looks, can *FFVII*'s menu-driven gaming ever attract a mass market in the West?



Name	Class	AC	Hits	Status
FIGHTER2	G-Fi	86	177	127
MAGE	G-Ma	66	77	77
FLYNN	G-Fi	66	316	316
BORG	G-Fi	66	259	259
ELITE	G-Fi	66	177	177



HP	MP	EXP	ITEM	WEAP
420	440	73		
291	315	92		
397	397	44		

With *FFVII* Square have shown the possibility of blending pre-rendered imagery, FMV cut scenes and 3D animation without sacrificing the immediacy of the game environment



found their own style of RPG construction, and the results were impressive. Nintendo's *Zelda* came to define the action RPG, combining adventure and exploration with more traditional arcade accessibility. A gentleman's duel would eventually break out when Square's *Final Fantasy* challenged Enix's *Dragon Quest* for the title of most popular SFC series. Meanwhile, Sega found that its Mega CD, a dismal failure over here, was a huge success when it came to PC Engine ports and RPGs with anime cut-scenes.

The employment of CD-ROM wasn't always so positive. Cryo's *Myst* could be seen as a pictorial reworking of the *Colossal Cave Adventure* ethic, turning the location descriptions into pre-rendered images compatible with point-&-click mechanics. But its rave reviews were mostly a comment on the use of technology rather than the existence of any decent playability.

Another blow to the integrity of CD-ROM was the invention of the FMV adventure. You know – once-great actors braving the embarrassment of terrible scripts and cheap special FX to pay the rent. Memory games and tile puzzles dressed up as 'an adult sci-fi thriller'. Seedy men in suits who think 'interactive movies' are the entertainment of the future. Philips CD-i. Cleavage and gore. Half an hour to complete when you've sussed all of the multiple choice answers. No, no, no.

With *FFVII* it seems that Square of Japan have demonstrated, at last, the possibility of blending pre-rendered imagery, FMV cut scenes and 3D animation without sacrificing the immediacy or interactivity of the game environment. It's their biggest adventure ever, and it could be yours, too. This is only happening on the PlayStation.

Glossary

Auto-mapping

Decent dungeon exploration games will provide this tool to record your progress. Games that expect you to use pencil and paper will one day burn in hell.

EXP

Abbreviation for Experience Points, the idea being that when you do something right, you also get better at it by accumulating EXP.

HP

Abbreviation for Hit Points, a measurement of your character's health. A



successful attack will reduce your hit points, and when you reach zero HP it's 'akki' – thud. The turn-based RPG is renowned for little numbers popping from heads to indicate the damage done by an attack.

Inventory

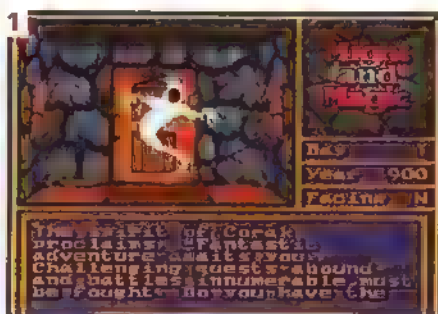
A list of your collected items. It's amazing what you can fit in an adventurer's backpack – several suits of plate mail, 350,000 gold coins – but if you've ever played an RPG with limited inventories or encumbrance penalties then you'll forgive the lack of realism.

Levels

Collect enough EXP and you may 'level up', improving your abilities across the board.

East vs West

(1) *Might & Magic* was one of many *Dungeon Master* clones. And a bit fat, at that. (2) *Legacy Of Kain* dressed up the old overhead hackfest with FMV and huge locations. (3) *Beholder's* characters were mere 'ability cyphers'. (4) In *FF3*, however, 12 of the 14 characters had revealing flashbacks, dark secrets and severe personal hang-ups. That's progress for you.



Think of *Might & Magic*, *Eye Of The Beholder*, *Wizardry*. Western role playing games have always concentrated on logic puzzles and lateral thinking exercises, often to the detriment of sensible character motivation. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the seminal 16-bit ST/Amiga title *Dungeon Master*, which many claim to be a precursor of *Doom*. Viewed in first-person perspective, the dungeon was one big box of locks, traps and obstacles to be overcome in whatever order was necessary. Your four-strong party of warriors and mages were stereotypes, with no personal history or ability to interact.

In contrast, Japanese audiences have always favoured sympathetic characters and strong storylines to carry their videogames. Identifying with the heroes is central to the appreciation of any Japanese RPG and puzzle content is often very simple, mere cursory obstructions to conjure

Japanese audiences have always favoured sympathetic characters and strong storylines to carry their videogames

a sense of progression without hindering less competent players.

Another familiar facet of Japanese videogaming is the *gaiden* or side-story. RPGs possess a rigid linear structure, tackling each dungeon or wilderness trek in order to move from cut scene to cut scene and thus follow the creator's intended sequence of dramatic events. But most of them also give you a chance to wander from the path briefly to uncover some extra treasure, perhaps resolve a minor plot point or discover a hidden character – such as the chance to reunite widowed orphan Gau with his father in Square's *Final Fantasy 3*. Japanese softcos will regularly exploit this attachment to popular characters and scenarios to create entire spin-off games based on them.

Perhaps the one exception to this East/West comparison is Richard Garriot's *Ultima* series. Although the *Underworld* titles were more in the tradition of *Dungeon Master*, with 3D environments and a first person perspective, the later adventures of Lord British were more concerned with establishing a believable premise and populating it with interesting folk. Linear progression wasn't enforced, but you would eventually discover an optimum route for solving the problems at hand.



In the old, old *D&D* days, it actually related to the depth of the dungeon – you'd expect to meet a level 6 monster wandering on the sixth floor level down, if you see.

MP

Abbreviation for Magic Points, a common system of limiting magic use so that you can't cast your brilliant Nuke Everything spell every round. Gah.

NPC

A non-player character, a CPU-intelligent person in the game world with whom you can interact but not control. Often protected by mysterious authoritative forces when you try to take an axe to one of them.

Parser

When playing old text adventures, this was the software routine that separated your commands into verbs and nouns and made sense of what you were trying to do. Ah, the hours you could spend entering 'USE MATCH ON LAMP... no... LIGHT LAMP WITH MATCH...'

Swear Box

You can guess at what impatient players might be tempted to type in when stuck on a difficult text adventure puzzle. Knowing programmers thus introduced this expletive-sensitive watchdog, penalising the offender with a lightning bolt, item loss or a jolly good beating from a swarthy dwarf.

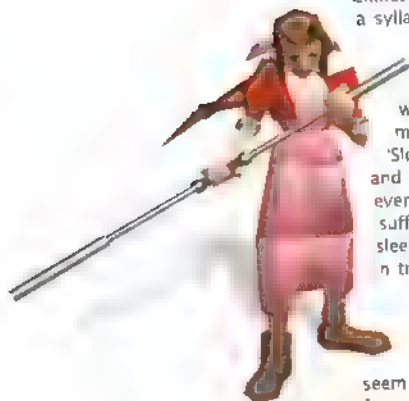
Lost in the translation

Translating games from Japanese to English poses rather more problems than simply converting NTSC code to PAL, especially when there's a significant quantity of text involved. Unless you reprogram the entire thing from scratch, the only option is to write your English translation over the Japanese text so that it occupies exactly the same space in memory. However, their alphabet uses 'kanji' characters, ideograms derived from Chinese script. A single kanji symbol can express a syllable or an entire word, so it's possible to say a great deal in a small space (*Legend Of The Holy Sword* requires just four letters). English, and its tiny alphabet, will happily spend six letters on a monosyllable with silent combinations like 'Slough'. See the problem? The loss of content and detail is regrettable, and not just for RPGs even the none-too-literary fighting game can suffer, with an incredible move name like 'the sleeping tiger awakens' reduced to 'gut punch' in translation.

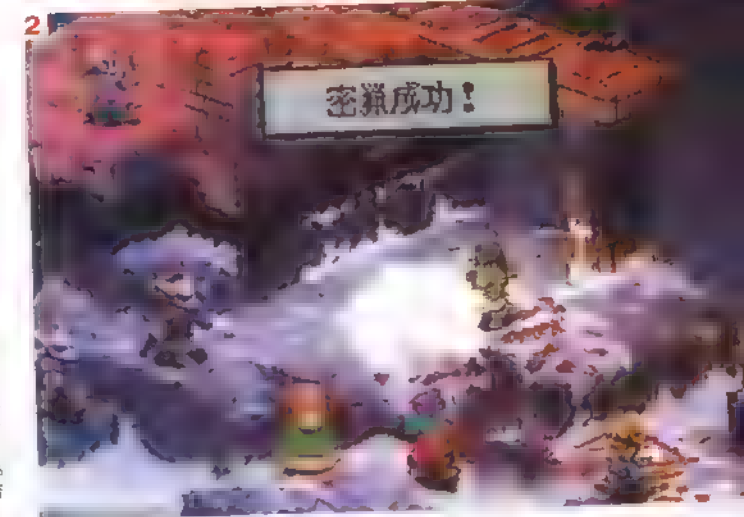
If a Japanese game is granted a Stateside release, a British version is at least more probable. Cultural differences can deter many Western publishers, however, who seem intent on feeding us the proven diet of cute furry mammals in trainers. They don't like to risk anything that J Public might find bizarre, and tiny purple wizards who zap away at each other using menu commands tend to fit this category, sadly.

Lastly, there's the issue that RPGs simply aren't as popular over here as they are in Japan and the States. The fans make up a small but vocal minority, and you'll regularly spot peas for more RPGs in letter columns. But the sales figures speak otherwise, and it may not prove economically viable to invest in lengthy, expensive translation.

Look on the bright side – only the top 10% of RPGs are worth playing, and half of those are likely to be converted,



(1) Square's *Front Mission 2* sells itself on the interplay of its mercenaries, their hopes, their dreams – but it's a strategy wargame. (2) Sometimes it's better to guess at your own translation of the text... But if you like the idea of expendable tiny folk battling it out under your control, gawp at *FF Tactics*. Coo.



Player classes

TIt's a common misconception to assume that all RPG fans are alike. You've heard of character classes – fighters, thieves, magic users and the like – but did you know there are also player classes? As you peruse the following categories we ask you to assess your own role...

Control Freaks

These are the people who immerse themselves in the battle system, trying to master its formulae and exploit any inconsistencies. Unfortunately, a lack of inspiration causes them to name all their characters after mates and girlfriends. One day, that saved game file will return to embarrass them.

Powergamers

These players are devoted to the creation of deity-slaying 99th level warrior mages. Do you dive into the weapons shop upon reaching any new location? Boring. Tell me about your mother...

Anarchists

The born subversive hates to be shuffled along by the story and will always

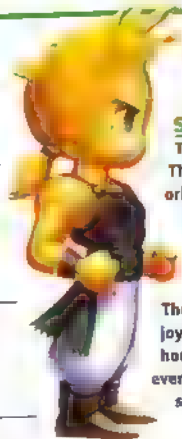
choose the obviously wrong path of action to see what happens – insulting monarchy, abandoning colleagues and shooting shopkeepers gives them away. Probably knew the 101 ways to kill Thorin in *The Hobbit*.

Storygamers

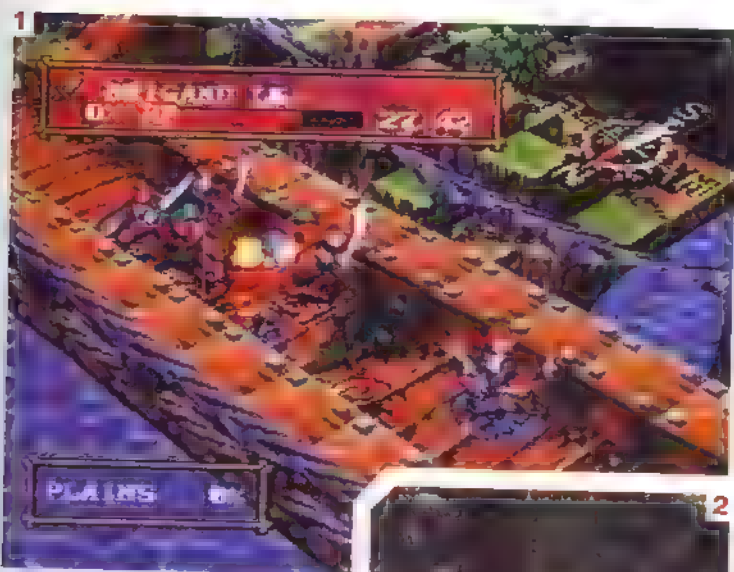
These folk like to see a narrative unfold, a plot played out, a conclusion reached. They adore multiple endings and character flashbacks and show off by using the original Japanese names for their heroes. But they regard it as a flaw when the life story of some minor NPC peasant isn't explained in the end sequence, and the worst cases resort to writing fan fiction. Hainous.

Friends

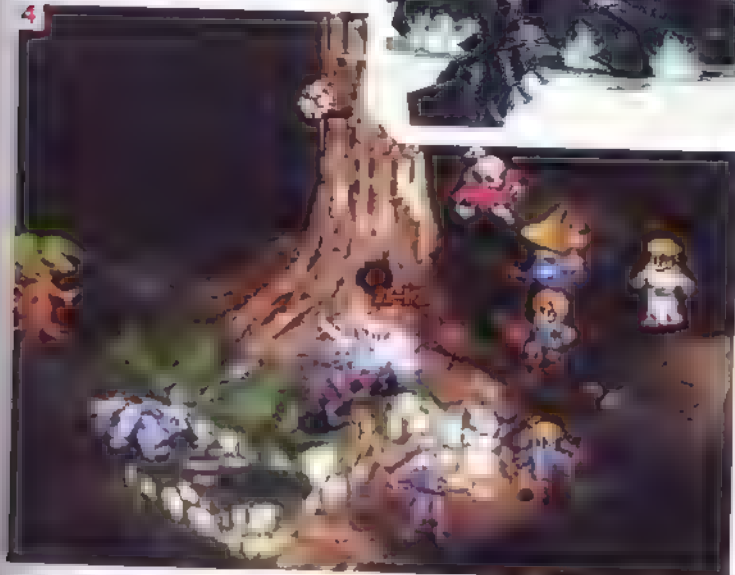
The purpose of these creatures is barely intelligible, as they don't even pick up the joypad to issue commands. Instead, they sit and watch you playing RPGs for half an hour before hinting that it might be nice to watch some telly, maybe go out for the evening, rather than spend another night hacking through Zorag of Tharn's evil stronghold. Their strongest tactic is to read the text boxes aloud, whereupon the cringeworthy dialogue often forces you to retreat.



A hex on your 'Station



(1) Konami's *Vandal Hearts* is a splendid fantasy skirmish battle - and it's out over here! (2) Upgrade your mobile suit to fit your pilot's battle skills in *Front Mission*. Square squeezed stunning graphics from the SNES... (3) And their exploitation of the PlayStation continues with *Front Mission Alternative*, which is looking none too shoddy. (4) More diminutive sword-wobbling in *Final Fantasy Tactics*, which draws on monsters and character types from all of the *Final Fantasy* roleplaying games.



Special mention should be made of the strategy RPG, or 'SLG' as the Japanese call it. Those who remember *Shining Force* on the Mega Drive, or obscure cult hit *Warsong* from the *Der Langrisser* series, will be familiar with the idea. The emphasis here is firmly on tactical combat and skirmish wargaming, such as you'll find in the *X-Com* series. However, the sequence of battles is held together by RPG elements such as story breaks and character advancement, often with the chance to upgrade your heroes between stages. Here's what you can expect on the PlayStation soon.

Vandal Hearts

You can pick up a perfect example of the sub-genre right now: we awarded Konami's excellent *Vandal Hearts* a 9/10 recommendation in *PSM20*, lauding its varied battle scenes and scripting. As long as you don't ruin it with the level-up glitch (ah, that would be telling) this will bring you many evenings of intelligent bloodletting.



Ogre Battle

There's a bit of cheating going on here, as this is actually the highly-acclaimed SNES game given a 32-bit gloss and re-released in the States. Not without flaws, but if you can imagine the joy of toasting a paladin detachment with your zombie dragon squadron, you're that special kind of fantasy gamer.

The emphasis is on tactical combat and skirmish wargaming... but the sequence of battles are held together by story breaks and character advancement.

Front Mission

Square has two *Front Mission* games lined up: *FM 2* will be a proper sequel to the Super Famicom skirmish wargame, an isometric turn-based affair where the player controls an elite force of mechanized mercenaries in a near-future conflict. *FM Alternative* wraps the same idea in smart polygon graphics, detailed 3D terrain and superb weapon effects, making it more attractive to the average punter. If you admit to a guilty pleasure in any game with chunky military hardware, this will be for you.

Final Fantasy Tactics

Vandal Hearts, Square-style. Many of the development staff worked on the charmingly monickered *Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together* (SFC), and this will follow the same format of lush rotatable 3D battlefields but with creatures from the *FF* world such as Dark Mages and Chocobos. Square promises that it will be more accessible to those who wouldn't normally consider strategy titles.



The next move...



ou may have felt a bit neglected in recent times, but RPG fans should soon have more than a few reasons to rejoice. Although we cannot presently confirm JK releases for many of the titles listed, some of them are almost certain to be heading our way. The general rule is that an American translation makes the prospect of PAL conversion all the more likely, so keep your eyes on PSM's news section in future issues.

Wild Arms • Media Vision

Media Vision's epic RPG has already been translated and released in the States by SCEA, so there's every chance of Sony letting us get our British woolly mitts on a PAL version when they reveal we have to wait until next year for *FFVII* (probably). The best RPG for the 'Station to date, *Wild Arms* looks like an old SNES game at first glance, but chances are you'll forgive them when you get into it: they've borrowed so many leaves from Square's book, see, that barely a dust cover escaped. Overhead sections play like an action RPG, with *Zelda*-like touches to test the abilities of your three-strong party of warrior, thief and priestess. But every so often you'll be attacked by wandering monsters, whereupon the whole game shifts to a 3D turn-based battle mode with gnarly polygonal monsters and some incredibly pyrotechnic deity-summoning spells similar to the Espers in *FFIII*.

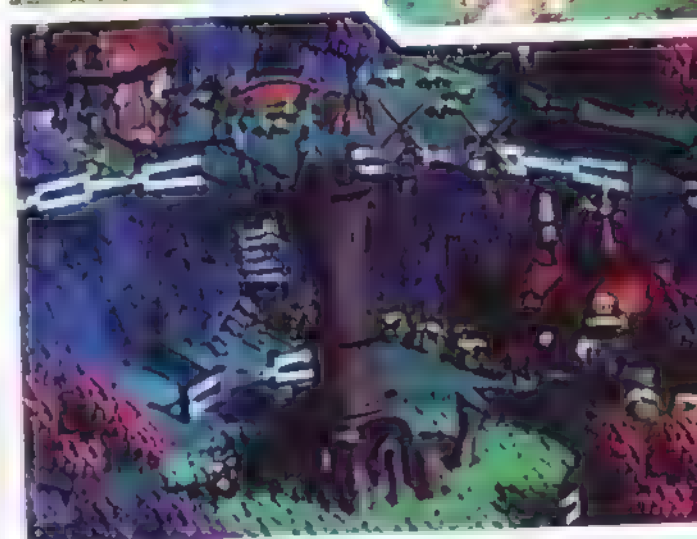
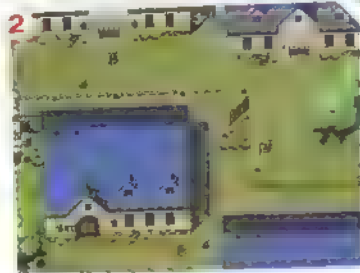
Alundra • Matrix

For those who can't bear turn based combat, this 32-bit take on the old action RPG will take you back to Enix's *Soul Blazer*, *Illusion Of Gaia* and *Tenchi Souzo*. Given that the development team incorporates many of the staff who worked on that isometric Mega Drive lovely, *Landstalker*, there's more than enough indication that it will be done well. A US translation is pencilled in for the end of the year, so the possibility of a UK release will probably depend on how well it's received across the Pond.

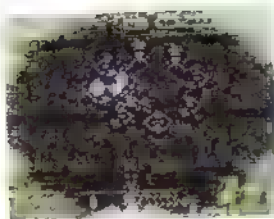
Saga Frontier • Square

The other big title currently under construction at Square's Japanese HQ, this is the latest title in their *Romancing SaGa* series last seen on the Super Famicom. Your party of warriors can be chosen from a wider selection of recruited allies, a la *Shining Force*, and breaks down into four classes. Humans are versatile; Spirits can only use magic; Mecha are restricted to physical weapons; and Monsters can transform to adopt the abilities of their victims. Graphically, the environments use pre-rendered backdrops in a similar technique to *FFVII* but with a brighter, more upbeat style that complements the cutely shiny sprites.

On the downside, no *Saga* game has ever been released outside of Japan. The complexity of Square's 'Free Scenario System', with its branching plot structure and character



[1] Though its battle scenes give it a sophisticated edge, the majority of *Wild Arms* is played out in traditional scrolling 2D environments [2] The game is reminiscent of the 16-bit 'golden age'. It seems that many RPG designers are still struggling to imitate Square's efforts on the SNES, while Square themselves push back the 32-bit boundaries [3] and create stunning vistas for the likes of *Saga Frontier*. [4] We have much to look forward



Matrix opt for a 32-bit take on the old action RPG in *Alundra*.



Upgrade choices, could prove difficult to translate. But with a little pressure from Sony, perhaps...?

Breath Of Fire III - Capcom

More kudos for Sony, with Capcom deciding to continue its own respected RPG series on PlayStation. While previous titles were strictly overhead affairs with 3/4-view battle scenes, *BOF III* dips into the possibilities of 32-bit to generate 3D cities, dungeons and battlefields that can be viewed from multiple camera angles. You play Ryu, a young adventurer who gradually uncovers the truth behind his special transformation powers. Again, expect dizzying numbers of secret bits, big blue hair, rampant anthropomorphism

and a few Capcom in jokes. *BOF III* was one of the last SNES games to receive a UK release, so the chances of a PAL conversion here are good.

Tales Of Destiny - Namco

At 64 megabits (8Mb), Namco's *Tales of Phantasia* was the biggest Super Famicom cartridge released. Then again, it did contain its own sampled pop theme song and built-in graphic equaliser... Fortunately, this 32-bit sequel should find Namco's RPG leanings more at home on CD. Although nothing has been confirmed, their close relationship with Sony may prompt a translation.

Persona - Atlus

An oddball plot in which college kids get mixed up in a roleplaying game and learn to harness real demonic powers, like a celebratory tongue-in-cheek swipe at the Christian Right's tabloid propaganda. The switching of graphical styles - 3D towns, first person corridor sections, 3/4 view battles - looks a bit ropey, though. This is already out in the States, where it hasn't performed as well as Konami's *Suikoden*, but the complexity of the combat and the degree of challenge it offers has earned it the preferential affection of expert players and statistics fiends.

Alien Earth - Melbourne House

With its darkly futuristic setting and clever opening plot twists, Beam Software's acclaimed *Shadowrun* (SNES, 1993) remains a fondly-remembered favourite. However, poor sales meant that the promised sequel never materialised - until now. *Alien Earth* retains the same gritty atmosphere as its predecessor, but the passé cyberpunk elements have been played down in favour of a more fashionable extra-terrestrial invasion scenario. The game is currently being developed for PC, a though Beam's experience in PlayStation development and conversion makes a console release look very plausible indeed.

Suikoden II - Konami

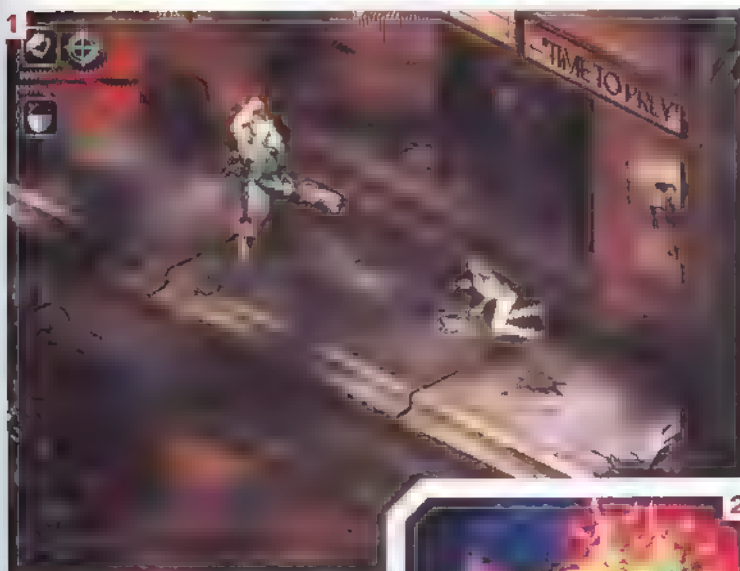
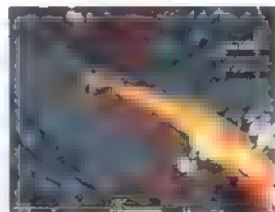
Already confirmed for the PlayStation, *Suikoden II* will pick up where the previous game left off.

FFVII

Sony can no longer afford to underestimate the number of gamers who upgraded from 16-bit to PlayStation in the knowledge that it would play host to Square's third-party titles. Their games exhibit a painstaking level of quality. First, they have always invested heavily in their creative staff. Second, they possess the technical resources to fully exploit whatever console they work on. Third, they never emphasise one aspect of game design over another: graphics, character design, plot scripting and soundtrack are all assigned equal importance.



Weird animal-faced heroes and secrets aplenty in Capcom's *Breath Of Fire III*.



(1) *Alien Earth*: a worthy sequel to *Shadowrun*? (2) *Persona* is purely for the stat-freaks. (3) Even Namco has its own RPG. (4) & (5) Getting a Stateside release at about the time you'll be reading this, *FFVII* will be enormous. And, er, spot the similarities to the very first *FF* game (6) on the NES...



Round-up

Europe



'And here come the Belgians'. From the Netherlands to Germany, and France to Scandinavia, a Euro-PlayStation revolution is ready to take place. **This month** we take a look at the **games in production** across the Channel and prepare for the allied invasion

Jeux sans frontières

Round-up Europe

Delphine Software is actually an offshoot of Delphine

Productions, a record label established in 1976 by Paul de Senneville, its speciality is easy listening and it made a fortune in the '70s and '80s

with the recordings of French Ivory tickler Richard Clayderman, a grinning flaxen-haired chancer who struck gold with a series of albums featuring music for piano and shotgun. Since 1988 Delphine has built a reputation as one of Europe's premier development teams

★ FLASHBACK

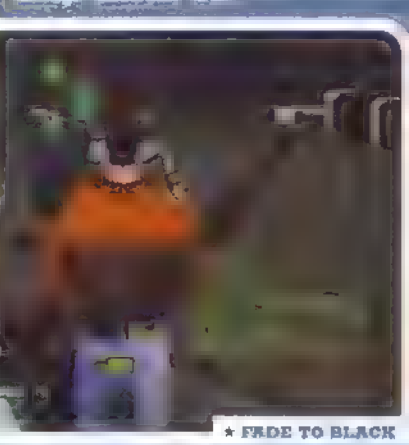


and is particularly strong at incorporating cinematic styles into genuinely playable games. Managing director

Paul Culasset comments: 'We

are one of the few private companies in France that have artistic integrity'

Flashback was a seminal adventure game on the Mega Drive with Conrad B. Hart as its central protagonist. Conrad returns in the 3D adventure on PlayStation, this time called Fade to Black. Both were published by Delphine



★ FADE TO BLACK

Delphine is named after Adeline made their name with

Flashback (1993) Mega Drive
Flashback (1993) Mega Drive
Flashback (1993) Mega Drive
Flashback (1993) Mega Drive

Flashback (1993) Mega Drive
Flashback (1993) Mega Drive
Flashback (1993) Mega Drive
Flashback (1993) Mega Drive

Delphine's sister, Adeline,

In 1998.

★ FUTURE WARS

(1993) PC

★ OPERATION STEALTH

(1990) PC

★ ANOTHER WORLD

(1991) Mega Drive

★ FLASHBACK

(1993) Mega Drive

★ FADE TO BLACK

(1998) PlayStation

Delphine

Founded 1988

Paris, France

Staff 27

In the pipeline

Delphine's next release will be *Moto Racer*, a motorbike racing game due in October. You can ride motor-cross on trial bikes, or hit the road on incredibly powerful superbikes.

Moto Racer which was previewed in *PSM2* looks like being one of the most exciting racing games seen yet on the PlayStation. Certainly it is the console's first arcade-style bike racing game. And with over 20 opponents to take on over a number of differing tracks, in various competition modes the opportunity for variety is huge. Worth seeing also just for the section along the Great Wall of China.

★ MOTO RACER



Moto Racer looks set to become one of the PlayStation's most exciting racing games. It's the first one in which arcade-quality racing bikes will have been involved.

★ MOTO RACER



★ MOTO RACER



How much of a success is *Alone in the Dark*? It's hard to say. The game was a commercial success, but it's not yet clear if it's a critical success. The game has been a success in the PC market, but it's not yet clear if it's a success in the console market. The game has been a success in the PC market, but it's not yet clear if it's a success in the console market. The game has been a success in the PC market, but it's not yet clear if it's a success in the console market.

are much bigger on the

Luke sees the firm picking

licence that means very little in the UK, Infogrames is confident that the game itself will be very strong, despite the subject matter. Even if it fails, you can bet your bottom franc that *V-Rally '98* won't, and Infogrames will be confirmed as a major force on PlayStation.



Infogrames' first titles on the PlayStation to date have been *Alone in the Dark* and the very successful *V-Rally*, a recent PSM cover star.



★ ALONE IN THE DARK

Infogrames



★ LUCKY LUKE

...cartoon persona which they hope to break in the UK.

In the pipeline

Infogrames' next major release for PlayStation will be *Lucky Luke*. It's based on a French cartoon strip that's been running for well over 50 years and features a iconic-looking cowboy as the eponymous hero. The game is basically a cartoon-style 3D platformer that Infogrames happily admits is aimed at the younger end of the PlayStation

market. There are also dozens of puzzles to solve throughout 15 levels, with imaginative power-ups and pretty cool camera techniques adding extra spice along the way. Meanwhile, the publisher's 'Well, well, what a surprise' department is working on the follow-up to *V-Rally*. It'll be called *V-Rally '98*, indicating that Infogrames has pretty firm plans to release the game sometime next year. More details will be revealed over the next few months.

Even if *Lucky Luke* fails, you can bet *V-Rally '98* won't, and Infogrames will be confirmed as a major force.

- ★ ALONE IN THE DARK (1990) PC
- ★ TINTIN IN TIBET (1994) SNES
- ★ ASTERIX'S GREAT ADVENTURE (1994) Mega Drive
- ★ V-RALLY (1997) PlayStation

Round-up Europe

★ **ADIDAS POWER SOCCER**
(1996) PlayStation

★ **INTERNATIONAL ADIDAS POWER SOCCER**
(1997) PlayStation

★ **CITY OF THE LOST CHILDREN**
(1997) PlayStation

Psygnosis is the Liverpool-based publisher that Sony bought four years ago and has so far supplied a string of classics such as *Destruction Derby 1 & 2*, *Wipeout 2097* and *F1*. This Parisian offshoot

★ ADIDAS POWER SOCCER



★ ADIDAS POWER SOCCER



then, is, in a roundabout way, part of Sony's in-house team.

In total Psygnosis employs 650 development staff around

the world but the company is looking to grow that figure to over 800 within the next 12 months. This means a substantial investment in all offices, and that will undoubtedly include the successful Paris office.

Psygnosis Paris

In the pipeline

Adidas Power Soccer 2 will be available before the end of the year. It will be a genuine all-new sequel rather than a belated whistles update, which is what Psygnosis conceded *International* was all along. Psygnosis is already boasting about a whole host of new features including eight new 3D stadiums, new commentary from Brian Moore, a vastly improved 3D game engine, all new stats and kits, new icon

system, more varied playing conditions and bags more motion capture. Basically, explains a spokesman, 'we've looked at the criticism of the first game, particularly of the

slow gameplay, and we've addressed all the issues.' Two more games are due before the end of the year: *Elric*, an isometric RPG that might just find a niche, while the

Island Of Dr. Moreau is the recent movie, based on the HG Wells novel of the same name. 1998 will also see the release of *oX*, a 3D strategy game.

★ ADIDAS POWER SOCCER 2



★ ELRIC



★ ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU



Power & Magic

In the pipeline

Power & Magic are unashamedly determined to establish themselves as sports specialists. Sequels to *UEFA* and *Extreme Shuss* are already in production. The firm has no wish to be all things to all games players; they simply want to be the name to trust in the world of sports.

Undoubtedly the most exciting Power and Magic prospect is *UEFA*, the soccer game that's threatening to blow *ISS Pro* away. Director Marc Djan is hugely confident that his firm's first release will be

classic. We are shooting way beyond *ISS*. The game we're really trying to beat is Sega's *Virtua Soccer* coin-op. Because of our technology *UEFA* can feature very, very large sprites on screen, many times during the match. We have a fast zoom-in option that enables you to watch players make passes and shoot and you actually see them make proper contact with the ball. This doesn't happen in other games because if you zoomed in you'd see

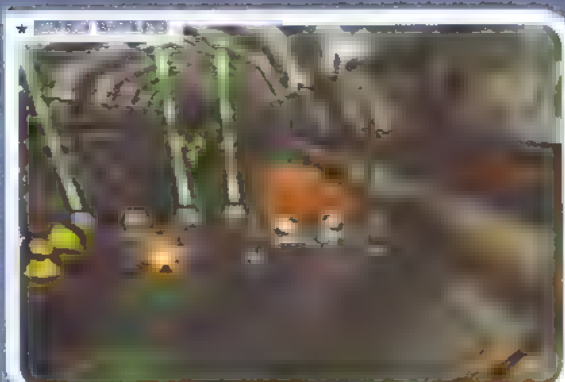
they never actually touch the ball. In real terms, their foot stops about 50cm away from the ball. *UEFA* is faster, smoother and much more realistic than any soccer game released on any console so far. The game should be available in time for Christmas. PAM (as the firm likes to be known) is also working on a skiing and snowboarding game with the working title *Extreme Shuss*. Djan claims this has more action and more variety than *Cool Boarders*, but a worse name.

★ UEFA



Power & Magic has yet to produce a game on any format, although the company's personnel have been responsible for over 30 products between them in past lives. These include *Mr Nutz* on the Super Nintendo and *Jurassic Park 2* on Gameboy.

After years of developing games for other people, Cryo has just become a publisher proper, with its latest batch of titles appearing under its own brand for the first time. This means, concludes international marketing manager **Andreas Stock**, that the next 12 months is the most important period in our history; it also means that games such as *Dreams* and *Ubik* need to be critical and commercial success stories if



Cryo is to achieve its avowed goal of making the leap from French developer to international software house. Meanwhile, the firm's 150 or so staff have no excuse for walking around in the usual programmer's garb of fatty



jeans and Metallica T-shirt. Perhaps they'll also have a taste for the odd drop of

bubbly and no doubt have some decent luggage and perfumes in their possession; but we ramble. The point we're trying to make is that two years ago the Louis Vuitton-Moët Hennessy Group took a 20 per cent stake in Cryo. And LVMH, of course, is the holding company behind such super-swish French brands as Christian Dior, Louis Vuitton, Givenchy, Kenzo and Moët et Chandon. Roll on Christmas bonus for the people at Cryo.



Cryo

* DREAMS



* DREAMS



Cryo's *Dreams* can be played in two different ways - either as an aggressive action game or as intelligent adventure. We know how we're going to be playing it.

In the pipeline

Two more Cryo games are due in the next couple of months. *Dreams* is a pretty weird and weirdly pretty title that can be played in two ways, either as an aggressive action game or an intelligent adventure game in which you clone characters to fight for you. Either way, a look following could be on the cards? *Ubik*, meanwhile, is

based on a novel by top sci-fi thriller writer Philip K Dick (he also wrote *Total Recall* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, the novel on which *Blade Runner* is based). Set in New York, in 2019, the plot of this action/strategy game involves cryonics, the colonisation of space, industrial espionage and gangs of telepathic robots.

* UBK



Ubik is based on a novel by Philip K Dick, he of *Total Recall* and *Blade Runner* fame. Set in New York in 2019, it's an action-strategy game.

* UBK



Round-up Europe

BACK-CATALOGUE

- ★ **ELITSERIEN '95**
(1995) PlayStation
- ★ **ELITSERIEN '96**
(1996) PlayStation

Neurostone's only two videogame titles to date have been glorified conversion jobs: *Elitserien '95* and *Elitserien '96* were localised versions of Electronic Arts' *NHL '95* and '96. *Elitserien* is the name of Sweden's domestic hockey league and Neurostone's versions featured all of its teams and players—although the gameplay

element was the same. However, while Neurostone might have started out applying suitably Swedish embellishments to an American franchise, the group is fiercely proud of its

first homegrown product, *Auto Destruct*—see below—and is determined to make a name for itself as a company that deals in original games rather than simply conversions.

Neurostone

Founded
Headquarters

1994
Stockholm, Sweden

Staff | 11

In the pipeline

★ AUTO DESTRUCT



★ AUTO DESTRUCT



Auto Destruct, due out in October, will be Neurostone's first ever original product. It's a combat car racer in which the thrill of driving very fast is supplemented by the even bigger thrill of blasting the crap out of other vehicles, passing pedestrians and, if

you're in the mood, even blowing up buildings. Alongside action there's an element of strategy, similar to that featured in the Strike series of games, handling your resources (particularly fuel, armour and ammunition) to pay dividends in the game's final outcome.

BACK-CATALOGUE

- ★ **SCREAMER**
(1995) PC
- ★ **SCREAMER 2**
(1996) PC

Milestone made its mark with its first product, *Screamer*. The game was credited with injecting a much-needed sense of excitement into the driving genre on PC, where the emphasis has traditionally been more on serious simulation than simply driving fast and having fun. It seems most likely

however, that the firm will come into its own on PlayStation with the release of *Superbikes* next year. Milestone is looking to provide the perfect

combination of accurate simulation, sheer speed, arcade action and pure gameplay. On bikes, it could almost be described as fast on two wheels, perhaps.

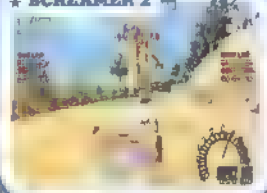
Milestone

Staff | 11

In the pipeline

Screamer is due out on PlayStation before the end of the year but it's a bit of a raise start for Milestone on the format. Firstly it's actually being converted by a UK team. Secondly, while the original *Screamer* was a huge critical and commercial hit around the world (nearly 8 million units shifted so far), *Screamer 2* saw the series stall a little. The next game, *Screamer*

★ SCREAMER 2

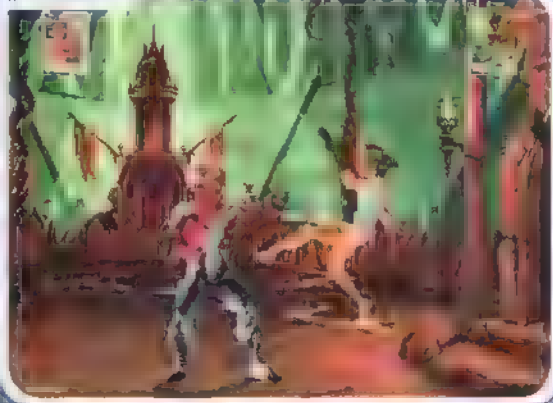


Rally (which Milestone boss Antonio Farina describes as more than an update but not *Screamer 3*) sees things back

on track—and cross-country. It will be out first on PC but a PlayStation version should follow next year. The first game that Milestone is writing directly to Sony's format, however, will be *Superbikes*. The game is based on the Superbike Championship. It's a spectacular spectator sport and should translate into a white-knuckle game. It will feature 18 bikes and 12

tracks spread across Europe, the US and Japan. Milestone has gone to great lengths to recreate every detail of every track and incorporate all technical data into the handling of the bikes themselves. The footage we've seen looks superbly smooth and the game itself is shaping up to be immensely playable. The only bad news is that it won't be out until the second half of next year.

★ WARRIORS



★ WARRIORS



* FAC IN TIME

(1993) SNES, Mega Drive
Gameboy

★ WARRIORS

(1994) 170

AL UNDER JR.
ARCADE RACING

(1995) PC: *Actually, Al Unser Racing was the first ever Windows 95 PC game. It wasn't all that good, though.*

K

akisto began life

In 1990 as Atreid

Concept founded by

Nicolas Gauge and funded by

computer manufacturer Apple.

It was bought by the

however, the two firms

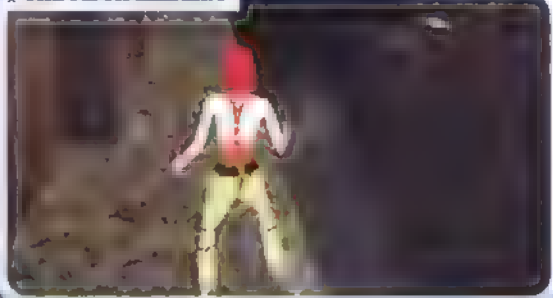
Director James Morris claims

players, aiming for the

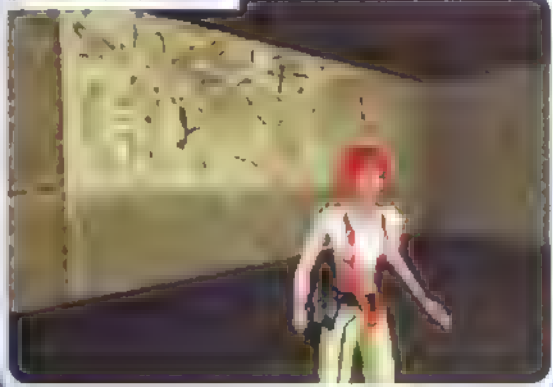
Kglisto

Hat
 1890
 1890
 1890

★ THE FIFTH ELEMENT




* THE FIFTH ELEMENT



In the pipeline

Two more Kaiko titles should hit the PlayStation before the end of '98, but the firm isn't revealing any details on them just yet. No doubt they'll be up to scratch though.



computer arts

The art, design and technology magazine for Mac and PC



**The software,
hardware and talent
behind the latest
games and computer-
generated art...**

EVERY MONTH:

- ▶ 3D RENDERING
- ▶ ANIMATION
- ▶ MULTIMEDIA
- ▶ DIGITAL VIDEO
- ▶ WEB DESIGN
- ▶ GRAPHIC DESIGN
- ▶ IMAGE MANIPULATION
- ▶ ILLUSTRATION

THIS MONTH:

- ▶ GRAPHICS SOFTWARE & GALLERY
- ▶ TOP TV AD-MAKERS PROFILED
- ▶ EVEN *G-POLICE!*

Issue 10
on sale 4th Sept

COMPLETE WITH XRES 2 FREE ON A SECOND CD

10 PSM is prepared to award a golden '10' to games which are perfect.

9 A splendid piece of software – recommended without prejudice.

8 Very, very good. Add it to your collection forthwith, if not sooner.

7 A great title with minor irritations, but still a worthy purchase.

6 A case of 'Why did they do that?'. Playable, but with some dodgy bits.

5 Straight average. Unoriginal or flawed, but still worth buying – just.

4 Below average. Probably has some serious gameplay or lifespan flaws.

3 Looking pretty bad. Maybe worth borrowing for a couple of days.

2 Borderline crap. Technically inept, poorly structured and short-lived.

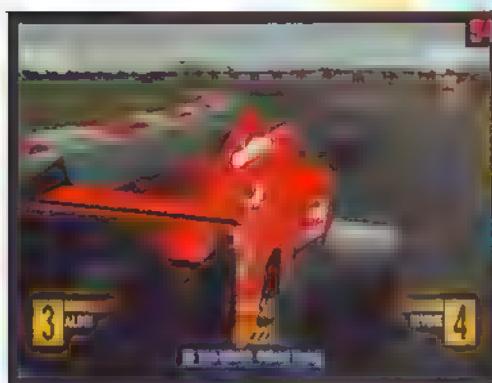
1 A product without merit or even so-called beyond human endurance.

0 Black coffee coaster in the shape of a CD. Dreadful, awful tat.

★ Special games which we think deserve to go on your 'must buy' list are also awarded our StarPlayer logo.

PlayTest

REVIEWED



Formula 1 '97 **94**

BA Toshinden 3 **102**

Explosive Racing **105**

Super Pang Collection **108**

Oddworld **110**

Kurushi **114**

Dynasty Warriors **117**

Kick Off '97 **120**

Lost World **123**

Hard Boiled **127**

Nuclear Strike **129**



Formula 1 '97

The sequel to the **best-selling** game of last year arrives with an **impressive screech**. But does it get the pole... or crash and burn?



LAP KEY

	FULL-THROTTLE
MAGGOTTS	0.75
CORNER	
MPH	
GEAR	
G-FORCE	



PUBLISHER:

Psychosis

DEVELOPER:

Bizarre Creations

RELEASE DATE:

September

ORIGIN:

UK

PRICE:

£44.99

STYLE:

Arcade racer/racing sim

SILVERSTONE



Most of the first ever modern Grand Prix, and still one of the best courses in the season. Built on a WWII airfield, Silverstone is one of the highlights of every Formula One season. Although it features a profusion of curves and bendy sections, it's a deceptively fast

course, with many fourth, fifth, and sixth gear sections. While this makes it exciting to drive, it also takes a lot of skill - it's all too easy to push a bend just a little too hard and end up in all kinds of trouble. Definitely one of our favourite circuits.



1996 GRAND PRIX RESULT

POLE POSITION

HILL 1 MIN 26.875 SECS

FASTEST LAP

VILLENEUVE 1 MIN 29.288 SECS

WINNERS

- 1 JACQUES VILLENEUVE
- 2 GERHARD BERGER
- 3 MIKA HAKKINEN
- 4 RUBENS BARRICHELLO
- 5 DAVID COULTHARD

TRACK FACTS

CIRCUIT LENGTH:

3.2 MILES/5.15 KM

RACE LENGTH:

61 LAPS



CHASSIS
FERRARI F310B

ENGINE
FERRARI V10

FIRST GP
1950 MONACO

GP STARTS
576

TYRES
GOODYEAR

WINS
109

TITLES
5 CONSTRUCTORS'
9 DRIVERS'



FERRARI

As with all Ferraris, this year's car is frighteningly fast, but the handling is still a problem. Schumacher, of course, is deadly, and Irvine can surprise you.



DATE OF BIRTH 3.1.69
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1991
GPS 91
WINS 23
POINTS 389



DATE OF BIRTH 10.11.65
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1993
GPS 54
WINS 0
POINTS 42

CHASSIS
WILLIAMS FW19

ENGINE
RENAULT V10

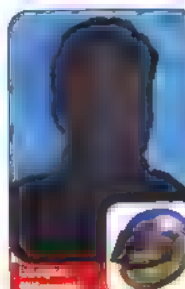
FIRST GP
1978 ARGENTINA

GP STARTS
305

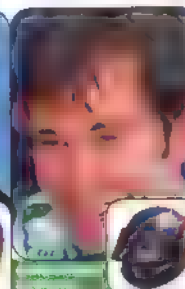
TYRES
GOODYEAR

WINS
99

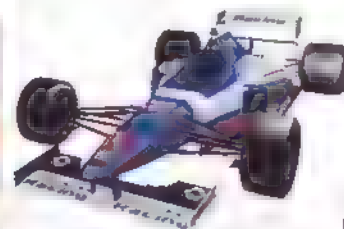
TITLES
8 CONSTRUCTORS'
6 DRIVERS'



DATE OF BIRTH 9.4.71
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1996
GPS 22
WINS 7
POINTS 108



DATE OF BIRTH 18.5.67
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1994
GPS 54
WINS 1
POINTS 39



WILLIAMS-RENAULT

Yet again Williams have fielded the best car of the season, with incredible cornering ability at ridiculous speeds. Plus Villeneuve is flamboyant but very talented.

CHASSIS
MCLAREN MP19

ENGINE
MERCEDES-BENZ V10

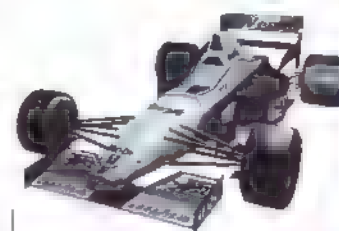
FIRST GP
1966 MONACO

GP STARTS
449

TYRES
GOODYEAR

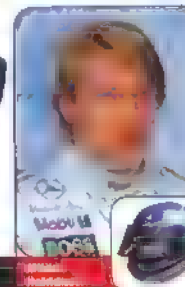
WINS
01

TITLES
1 CONSTRUCTORS'
1 DRIVER'S

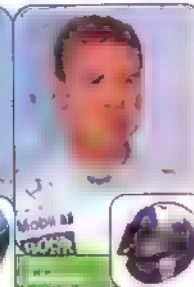


MCLAREN-MERCEDES

With the most powerful engine of any car this year, the McLaren is very fast, but hard to set up right. It's worth keeping an eye on Coulthard, as well.



DATE OF BIRTH 28.9.68
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1991
GPS 86
WINS 0
POINTS 104



DATE OF BIRTH 27.3.71
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1994
GPS 47
WINS 2
POINTS 92



DATE OF BIRTH 30.6.75
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1997
GPS 6
WINS 0
POINTS 4

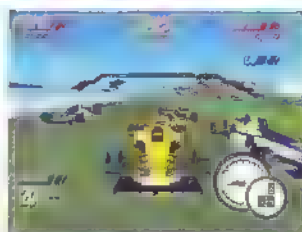
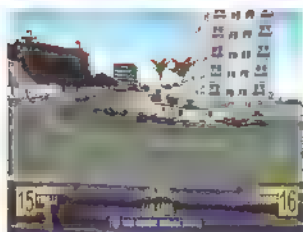
DATE OF BIRTH 14.1.73
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1996
GPS 14
WINS 0
POINTS 4



JORDAN-PEUGEOT

The Jordan is very quick in the corners, and backed up by a powerful engine. Both drivers, while young, are very promising, with a lot of natural talent.

PlayTest



No, these aren't pre-rendered intro sequences - all of these shots are from the game itself. The cars are now made up of nearly 1,200 polygons each, as compared to F1's 700 or so. Combine that with the high-resolution graphics, improved lighting, and tweaked shading, and this is the stunning result.



For all its minor faults and the annoying bugs, *Formula One* was still an incredibly good racing game, even on a machine like the PlayStation, which is hardly lacking for choice in the genre. It's not surprising, then, that the sequel became one of the most eagerly awaited games in the machine's short but illustrious history as soon as it was announced. As the programming progressed, we've heard and seen more and more of the game, and everything sounded a most too good to be true - the developers, Bizarre Creations, seemed set on producing the ultimate Grand Prix game, and what's more, they seemed capable of doing it.

Now the waiting is over, the game is finished. And it's everything that any PlayStation owner could have hoped for - if not more.

The first thing you have to realise about *F1 '97* is that this is no mere update. Bizarre haven't simply spiced up the graphics, changed the names to reflect the current season and thrown the result in a nice shiny new box. *F1 '97* is still a Formula One racing game, but it's a completely new one, rewritten from the ground up and superior to its predecessor in almost every

[F1 '97 is a completely new racing

game, rewritten from the ground up and

superior to its predecessor

in almost every regard]

regard. Or rather, it's two completely new games. One is a pure arcade racer - fast, forgiving, simple to pick up, challenging to master, great fun, and horribly addictive. The other's a full-on racing simulation - accurate, realistic, complex, absorbing, and far more challenging, but just as much fun and equally addictive.

So different are the Arcade and Grand Prix modes, in fact, that they almost deserve reviews of their own. But they do share one important thing: the graphics engine. And what an engine. **If you thought that the original *F1* looked great - and let's face it, it did - prepare to be stunned by *F1 '97*.**

Perhaps the most obvious and most important change is the resolution. The whole game now runs in 512 x 256 high resolution throughout, giving the whole game a crisper and clearer look. Bizarre haven't stopped there, though. They've also taken full advantage of the increased detail afforded by the higher resolution, and both the newly-updated and re-modelled tracks and the cars are even ▶



Formula 1 '97

The Grand Prix mode

Although the Arcade game is strong enough to stand on its own, the heart of *F1 '97* is undoubtedly the Grand Prix mode. This is where things get really impressive.

With *F1 Bizarre* were concerned about making the game too 'simmy' – *F1* cars are far from easy to drive, after all – and so toned down the realism in an effort to make things playable. The massive response to the game, though, convinced them that us gamers were more than up to the challenge. As such, *F1 '97*'s Grand Prix mode is far more complex and challenging than the first game. It's also more absorbing, with greater depth to the gameplay and a longer lifespan – mastering *F1 '97* will take weeks or months. It all comes down to the increased levels of detail, redesigned physics model, and improved AI.

While the first game gave you a fair degree of control over your car set-up, *F1 '97* takes the PlayStation to new levels of authenticity and control. Before each race you can select from an incredible range of options, fine-tuning both the difficulty and realism to your tastes, completely setting up your car.

The general options allow you to choose the race length; skill level (there are five); steering assist; braking assist; which sessions to complete (practice, qualify and race, qualify and race, or just race); damage; failures; weather (more on this later); tyre wear; fuel depletion; tear offs; and flags (penalties for dangerous driving, and warnings of hazards). The car set-up then gives you control over almost every part of the car

– gears, tyres, tyre compound, suspension, brake discs, brake bias, front and rear downforce, and fuel load.

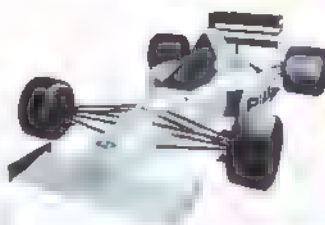
All of these options work hand in hand with the physics of the cars and racing conditions, making this a more advanced and more demanding game to master but one that has far more subtlety and scope. Each wheel's level of traction and braking is calculated individually, taking into consideration the tyre compound, level of wear, weather, and track condition. Steering is affected by the centre of gravity and momentum of the car. Likewise the weather system has been improved, allowing for rain to come and go during the race, and for conditions to worsen.

Finally comes the AI used to control the other drivers. In *F1*, all the drivers were controlled by the same basic AI, which tended to ignore the player in favour of the racing line, and always drove infallibly – left to their own devices the computer cars would always finish, and normally in about the same order. In *F1 '97* the basic AI engine has been expanded, allowing for more realistic and aggressive driving behaviour, and each individual driver is rated in a number of areas of skill, giving each computer car its own personality. Further, the AI also incorporates a random element, which means that the computer cars not only drive to win, but also run the risk of overcooking things somewhat. Collisions, skids, spin-outs, and more, are all possible, and with damage and failures turned on, the AI cars can put themselves out of the race, just like in real life, and just like you.



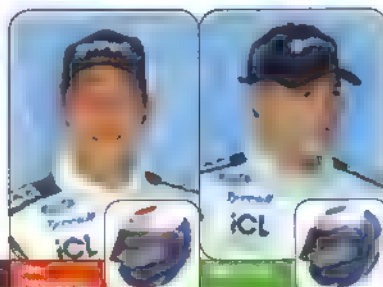
The Benetton-Renault remains an impressive car, and is one of the best choices for *F1 '97*'s Arcade mode, being superbly balanced.

CHASSIS
TYRRELL 025
ENGINE
FORD V8
FIRST GP
1970 CANADA
GP STARTS
391
TYRES
BRIDGESTONE
WINS
21
TITLES
1 CONSTRUCTORS
2 DRIVERS



TYRRELL-FORD

● Another team that suffers from a lack of money. Although the V8 engine is good, it can't match the V10s used by the best cars. The same can be said of the chassis.



DATE OF BIRTH 4.3.72
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1994
GPS 37
WINS 0
POINTS 11

DATE OF BIRTH 30.11.66
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1994
GPS 41
WINS 0
POINTS 12

CHASSIS
ARROWS A 8
ENGINE
YAMAHA V10
FIRST GP
1978 BRAZIL
GP STARTS
294
TYRES
BRIDGESTONE
WINS
0
TITLES
0



DATE OF BIRTH 17.9.60
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1992
GPS 73
WINS 21
POINTS 326

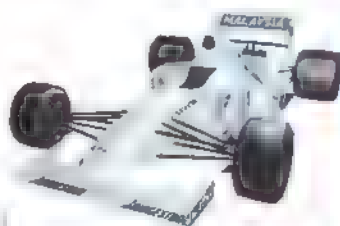
DATE OF BIRTH 22.5.70
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1995
GPS 39
WINS 0
POINTS 2



ARROWS-YAMAHA

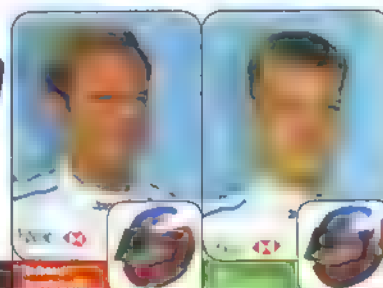
● Let down by a weak engine and lacking enough grip or downforce, the Arrows isn't a very promising car. Only Hill's talent keeps it in contention every now and then.

CHASSIS
STEWART SF 1
ENGINE
FORD V8
FIRST GP
1997 AUSTRALIA
GP STARTS
6
TYRES
BRIDGESTONE
WINS
0
TITLES
0



STEWART-FORD

● For a new team, the Stewart is an amazingly good car, with lots of grip and an excellent chassis let down only by the engine. The drivers are good, but not superb.



DATE OF BIRTH 23.5.72
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1993
GPS 70
WINS 0
POINTS 52

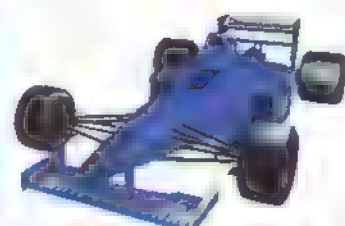
DATE OF BIRTH 4.7.73
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1995
GPS 7
WINS 0
POINTS 0

CHASSIS
BENETTON-RN01
ENGINE
MUGEN V10
FIRST GP
1997 SWEDEN
GP STARTS
112
TYRES
BRIDGESTONE
WINS
9
TITLES
0



DATE OF BIRTH 2.9.66
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1994
GPS 55
WINS 1
POINTS 53

DATE OF BIRTH 1.4.71
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1997
GPS 6
WINS 0
POINTS 0



PROST-MUGEN HONDA

● Good, strong grip combined with a good engine and decent chassis makes this another good car, although Nakano isn't much of a driver.

PlayTest!



F1 '97 supports both the **DualShock** and Sony's new analogue pad. For **Arcade** mode, we prefer the normal pad. **Grand Prix**, though, really requires an analogue controller of some kind.



► closer to the real thing. On many of the courses even the trees are in the right places, and the cars are now made up of 1,200 polygons each, as opposed to the original's 700 or so.

Similarly, all the various effects have been improved, with transparent smoke, dust, and sand effects, and a much improved weather system that features actual rain and slowly increasing water on the tracks.

Nowhere is this increased detail more apparent than in the **Grand Prix** mode with some of the options turned on. All of the cars are now fully deformable, getting crumpled up in the areas hit when colliding, suffering from bent or broken off wings, and being able to lose

whole wheels. The bits that fly off of a damaged car also stay on the track, presenting obstacles to other drivers and damaging cars that hit them in turn. Switch on **Fuel** and you open yourself up to engine fires, oil leaks and whole range of other problems, all of which are gorgeously presented on screen.

There are also more views available – a full eight perspectives on the action in **Grand Prix** mode, including an **in-the-cockpit** view, complete with steering wheel and hands that turn to match your actions. Turn on **Tear Offs** and this view even slowly degrades in quality as dust, grit and oil accumulate on your visor until your driver uses a tear-off strip, cleaning it.

Amazingly, though, **F1 '97's** graphics are just as fast or faster than the original's low-res engine. **F1 '97** runs at 25 frames per second on our annoyingly slow PAL machines, and managing a steady 30 fps on NTSC systems, even when there are a dozen or more cars on the screen.

Part of this is due to the cunning new routes ►

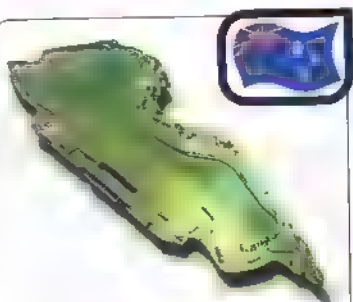


The increased detail is most

apparent in Grand Prix mode. All of the cars

are now fully deformable, and stray

bits of debris stay on the track.



MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

● This is only the second year that the **Albert Park** track has been used. It's a fast, challenging course with an often dusty surface.



INTERLAGOS, BRAZIL

● Lots of long, deceptive bends and a bumpy surface, known for launching drivers into the numerous gravel pits, make Interlagos a tough nut to crack.



BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

● Normally the heat, rather than the course, is the problem here. Several long straights and tight corners make it hard to get the right set-up.



IMOLA, SAN MARINO

● The course where **Ayrton Senna** died has often been criticised for being dangerous, but it's great fun to drive and satisfyingly fast.

Formula 1 '97



Arcade mode is very forgiving – stacks like this are no more than a temporary inconvenience...

The Arcade mode

This is just what it says: a pure arcade game with no pretence at being realistic but every intention of being as playable as possible.

All the courses are split into four difficulty levels – Easy, Medium, Hard, and Extreme. At the start of a new game you can choose the beginning circuit on any of the first three levels. You then select your team. Each team's cars are rated in four areas – Acceleration, Top Speed, Grip, and Braking – using simply bars to indicate their relative strengths and weakness, and allowing you to choose one that's best suited to the course in question. Then you choose between manual and automatic gearing, and you're into the race. In Arcade mode you always start at the back of the grid, and there's a time limit for each race. You must not only finish but do so in the points in order to progress to the next track of that difficulty level. Gaining access to the Easy, Medium, and Hard courses then allows you to choose the Extreme difficulty level. Along the way

there are a number of bonus tracks and other secrets that become accessible if you do particularly well – finishing first in every race, for example.

The cars in Arcade mode handle with great ease, and even running on to the grass or gravel pits doesn't cause you too many problems. It takes only a couple of laps to get to grips with the controls, and before you know it, you're powersliding around bends and screaming up through the pack. There's no damage, fuel, or anything else to worry about – just winning the race.

Deceptively simple though it may seem at first, however, the difficulty levels have been very finely tuned and as you progress you find yourself developing more and more skill.

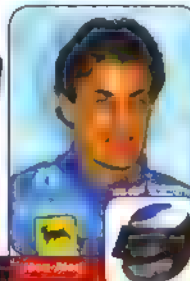
The Arcade mode is perhaps most reminiscent of the classic *Virtua Racing* arcade machine, predecessor to *Daytona* and *Sega Rally*, but with all 22 cars to contend with and the amazing sound and graphics of Bizarre's new game engine. It oozes playability.

CHASSIS
BENETTON B197
ENGINE
RENAULT V10
FIRST GP
1981 ITALY
GP STARTS
240
TYRES
GOODYEAR
WINS
26
TITLES
1 CONSTRUCTORS'
2 DRIVERS



BENETTON-RENAULT

● One of the most balanced and reliable cars, with two strong, experienced drivers. Not to be underestimated.

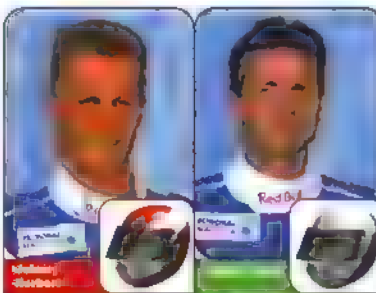


DATE OF BIRTH 11.6.64
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1989
GPS 124
WINS 1
POINTS 196



DATE OF BIRTH 27.8.59
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1984
GPS 202
WINS 9
POINTS 368

CHASSIS
SAUBER C46
ENGINE
FERRARI V10
FIRST GP
1993 SOUTH AFRICA
GP STARTS
71
TYRES
GOODYEAR
WINS
0
TITLES
0

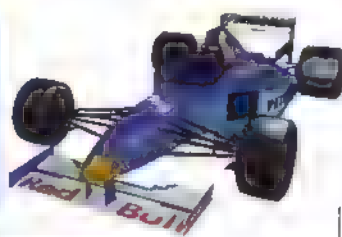


SAUBER-PETRONAS

● A powerful engine gives the Sauber a good turn of speed but is a year out of date. Herbert is fine driver, though.

DATE OF BIRTH 27.6.64
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1989
GPS 102
WINS 2
POINTS 72

DATE OF BIRTH 19.3.64
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1987
GPS 52
WINS 0
POINTS 7

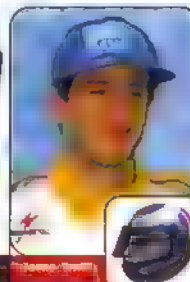


CHASSIS
MINARDI M197
ENGINE
HART V10
FIRST GP
1985 BRAZIL
GP STARTS
194
TYRES
BRIDGESTONE
WINS
0
TITLES
0



MINARDI-HART

● Considering the team's tiny budgets, the Minardi is a decent little car – it just hasn't managed the same quality as the big boys.



DATE OF BIRTH 29.5.63
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1992
GPS 84
WINS 0
POINTS 5



DATE OF BIRTH 13.7.74
FIRST GRAND PRIX 1997
GPS 6
WINS 0
POINTS 0



JEREZ, SPAIN

● The other new course for '97 takes some time to master, but can be a lot of fun. There's a good mix of features, and it's not too hard to overtake on.



HOCKENHEIM, GERMANY

● Even after the addition of three speed-reducing chicanes, Hockenheim remains one of the fastest courses, with several flat-out straights.



HUNGARORING, HUNGARY

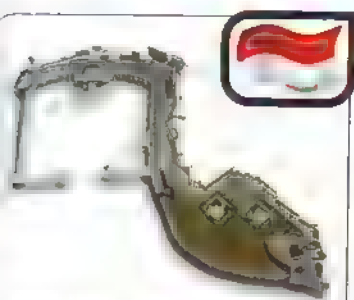
● The first circuit behind the former Iron Curtain to host a Grand Prix is a slow, narrow and frustrating course. It's more like a procession than a race.



SPA, BELGIUM

● Integrating all of the best elements of the original, nine-mile course, Spa is arguably the best Grand Prix circuit – it's got all you need for a great race.

PlayTest



MONACO, MONTE CARLO

● The most glamorous F1 course, but one of the hardest to drive. The street-based circuit is bumpy and narrow, with many tight corners.



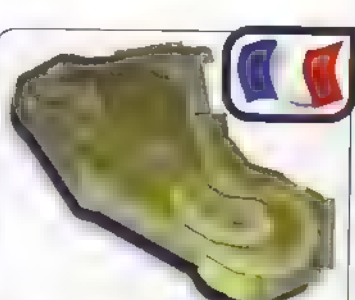
BARCELONA, SPAIN

● Site of the unforgettable duel between Senna and Mansel in 1991, the Catalunya circuit requires ceaseless concentration to drive.



MONTREAL, CANADA

● A cross between a street circuit and a permanent road course, featuring a combination of fast sweeping sections and tricky low-gear corners.



MAGNY COURS, FRANCE

● Renovated by the French government and first used in 1991, Magny Cours is a frustrating track with too many hairpins and slow corners.

► used, part is due to the extra time that Bizarre had to produce this sequel, and part is down to a particularly clever dynamic drawing routine. While F1 simply drew everything all of the time, resulting in slow-down and the odd jump when things got busy on the screen, F1 '97 works out how much it can draw and maintain the frame rate. It starts with the most important stuff – the track and the cars – and then draws as much of the background as it can in the time it has, before moving on to the next frame. In practice this is hardly noticeable when you're actually playing, and even spectators can find it hard to spot. And even if it does bother you, there's the option to turn it on or off to suit your tastes.

The overall result, then, is that F1 '97 is one of the best-looking games of any kind currently available for the PlayStation, pushing the limits of the machine



once again, and setting a new standard for others to follow.

Backing up this visual splendour is the sound, which has also been vastly improved. Whereas the original game had two engine noises – one inside the car, and one outside – F1 '97 uses multiple samples recorded at different positions in and around a variety of the different cars. These are then combined to give each team's car its own distinct sound, which even varies depending on your current view.

Then, of course, there's the music – 12 completely new CD-quality tracks, split into Arcade and Grand Prix style. The former are dancey and upbeat, while the latter are more guitar and orchestral in style. The sound controls allow you to pick which tracks you want to hear in any given race.

Finally comes the commentary – one of the most outstanding and immensely popular aspects of the original game, and another area that's been improved. There's now three times as much speech, featuring the return of the inimitable Murray Walker and also his new sidekick, Martin Brundle. Murray continues to scream out the most

Alternatively...

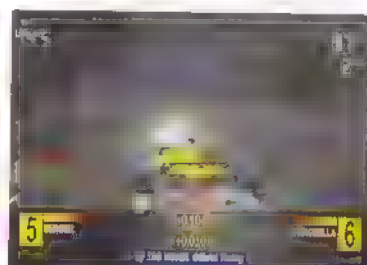
F1 '97	B. 10	PSM24
F1	B. 10	PSM11
V-Rally	B. 10	PSM21
Parasite Challenge	B. 10	PSM10
Andretti Racing '97	7/10	PSM11
NASCAR Racing '98	4/10	PSM14

F1 '97's graphics engine is faster

than the original, running at 25fps on our

slow PAL machines, even with a

dozen or more cars on the screen



The new and improved weather effects are just as impressive as the rest of the game, allowing for waterlogged sections, and changes in conditions. Likewise, the computer drivers now react to the weather and slow down.

Formula 1 '97



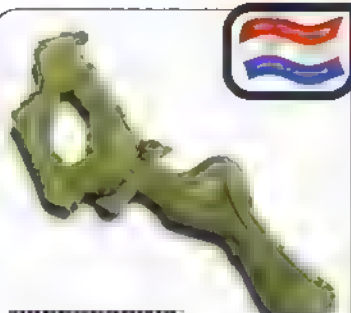
MONZA, ITALY

● One of the most popular courses that has everything you'd expect from an Italian track – an adrenalin-filled ride, and the fastest GP circuit.



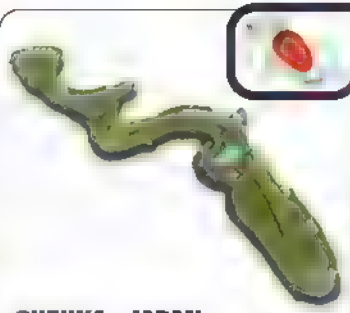
A1 RING, AUSTRIA

● New to F1 this year, the A1 is an interesting course, with three long straights and several second and third gear corners that take time to master.



NORZOKING, LUXEMBOURG

● Much shorter than the amazing original circuit, which had over 14 miles of changing gradients and corners, but still fun.



SUZUKA, JAPAN

● The only Grand Prix course with a 'figure of 8' layout, Suzuka is a great course, with a mix of corners and one stupidly fast straight.



As if just driving wasn't hard enough, you can turn on failures – crashing in scenes like these, if you're unlucky.



ridiculous comments throughout, while Brundle tends to stick more to the facts – they play off of each other brilliantly. There's also an optional, over-the-top 'American style' commentator for the Arcade mode who's either amusing or annoying depending on your tastes, and the Grand Prix mode features pit radio. As you race, your pit crew keep in touch, letting you know about the state of your car and fuel load, advising you when to come into the pits, and so on. It all adds up to an incredibly atmospheric and involving experience.

As ever, though, it's not the graphics and the sound that make a great game, it's how it plays, and this is where we come back to the two very distinct game modes. Whereas F1's Arcade mode was nothing more than a slightly more forgiving version of the Grand Prix mode, F1 '97 really is two games in one – and they couldn't be more different in style and approach.



World Champion

Put it all together, throw in a great two-player, split screen mode with the choice of either horizontal or vertical splits, and the result is, without a doubt, one of the most ambitious PlayStation games yet. And one which really delivers on its promise. There isn't a shortage of good racing games for the PlayStation, but there's nothing quite like F1 '97 in terms of depth, realism, and longevity. Only V-Rally comes anywhere near close in terms of the physics and driving models, but rally cars are a whole different kettle of fish, and a direct comparison is unfair to both games. F1 '97 is one of the greatest driving games ever, regardless of format, and an even more required purchase than the original. Simply superb.

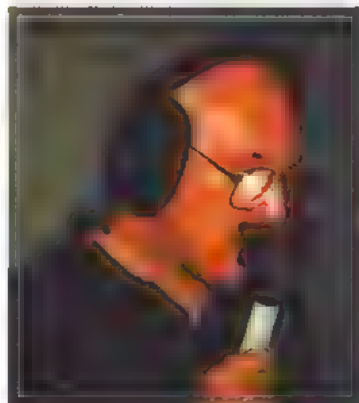
VERDICT

GRAPHICS	Just take a look... 9	GAMEPLAY: Fun arcade, challenging sim	9
SOUND:	Great speech and effects 9	PRESENTATION:	Very smooth 8
LIFESPAN:	How long do you want? 10	ORIGINALITY:	Erm, a racing game 5

Official UK PlayStation Magazine 24

Murray poll

The good news for Murray Walker fans is that there's even more of him in the new game. But what does he actually think of the game?



How did you get involved in F1 '97?

I was contacted by Psygnosis following on from my involvement with the original F1. The commentary for F1 '97 took about four hours to record, give or take a couple of tea breaks. Unlike the original, there was about three times as much to say and when some of the phrases have to be repeated up to three or four times, with varying degrees of emphasis, it does become hard work. All part of the fun, I suppose. The commentary was all scripted, but because of the last-minute track changes (the inclusion of Jerez) I did have to re-write some of the commentary to compensate.

How much have you seen of the game itself? Have you played it at all?

I own a copy of the original, although I never really have time to play it. One thing I was curious to find out was how the commentary worked. Having not been involved in a computer

game before, I didn't know how they would implement the commentary into the finished game. I think what surprised me the most was F1's success. I live in a small village, and when I got speaking to one of the local computer games stores, they told me how they had ordered 100 copies on day one and sold them all the same day.

How did you get involved in the original F1?

I was contacted by Psygnosis directly. They arranged for me to visit Bizarre Creations and look at the game under development. I was very impressed with the set-up and was only too glad to become involved.

What about the new game, then?

The sequel appears to be even more impressive. With the '97 licence and the inclusion of all the new teams, drivers and tracks, it can only help to benefit the sport as a whole.

Do you play many computer games? If so, which ones are your favourites?

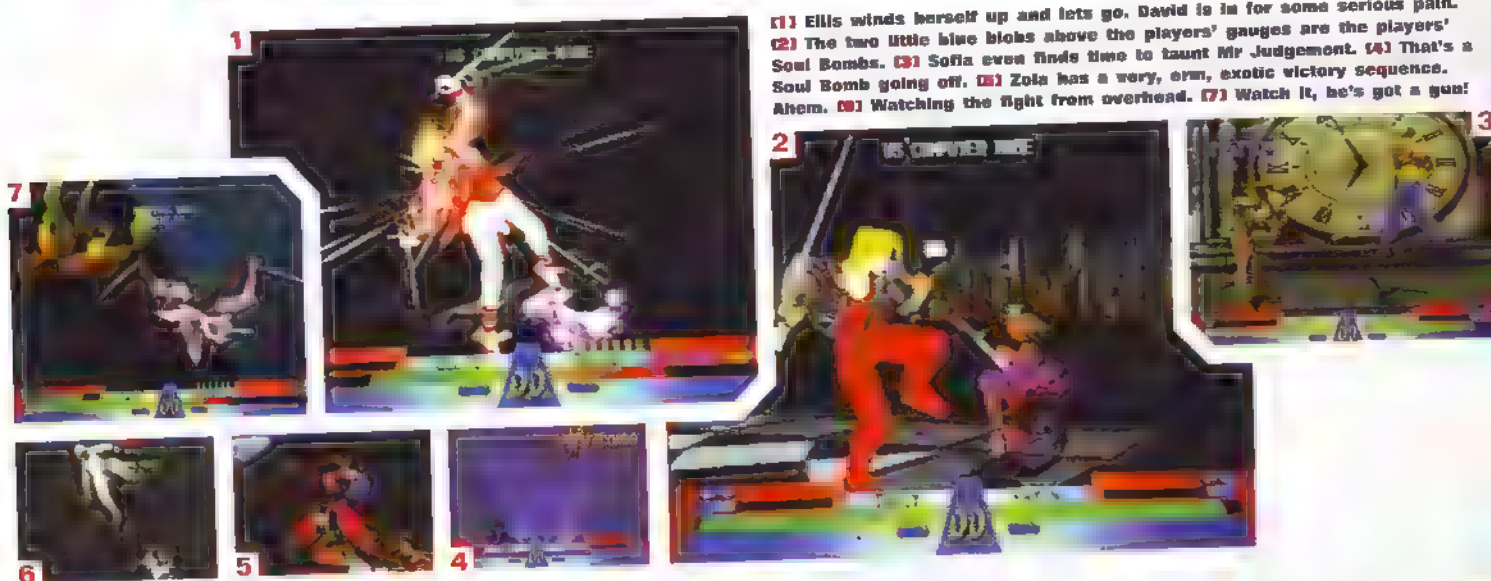
I think I may be getting a bit too old to start playing computer games, but certainly everyone I've spoken to who has played the original game was very impressed with it.

What about the future?

I have signed an exclusive agreement with Psygnosis which means I'll be doing the commentary for their Formula 1 series for the next two years. And as I said earlier, with the new '97 licence and all the new features, this should keep the most ardent F1 fan happy. I'm looking forward to working with them on future projects. It'll be interesting to see how they cope with the numerous changes in the fast-paced world of Formula One.

Formula 1 was just the warm-up lap. F1 '97 is the whole damn championship. In the words of Murray, 'WE'VE GOT REAL EXCITEMENT COMING UP NOW'.

9 out of 10



(1) Ellis winds herself up and lets go. David is in for some serious pain. (2) The two little blue blobs above the players' gauges are the players' Soul Bombs. (3) Sofia even finds time to taunt Mr Judgement. (4) That's a Soul Bomb going off. (5) Zola has a very, erm, exotic victory sequence. Ahem. (6) Watching the fight from overhead. (7) Watch it, he's got a gun!

Battle Arena Toshinden 3

How much further can this genre go? Already we've got games with more special moves than ordinary ones in a desperate bid for the beat 'em up crown...

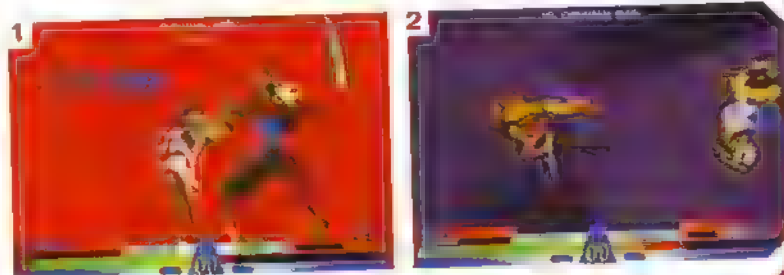
And what an amazing number of special moves each of the game's 14 basic characters have. Let's take one character, Sofia (a brainwashed victim of the game's baddies, the ominous Organisation, apparently). As well as having the basic punch and kick attacks (which come in weak and strong versions), and the usual upper defence, lower defence, cartwheels, dash dodges and crawls, our Sof's a dab hand at Thunder Rings, Aurora Revolutions, Love Showers, Rattle Snakes (with her whip), Pleasure Arts, Velvet Scorpions and the super-secret Love Lover and Call Me Queen attacks.

Naturally you get to recognise how to invoke a couple of these when you're playing, but the rest just seem to come as you thrash away at the buttons. All of them, it must be said, look damn spectacular - especially when you're in 30 fps mode (the game allows you to switch between 30fps, to enjoy all that background texture mapping, and 60fps for sheer speed, though you'd be hard pushed to notice

the difference between 'em when you're playing). But don't expect to enjoy the fighting action if you're using one of the game's more useless viewing modes - sky mode. This takes you a mile above the action, where it's impossible to work out what's going on.

As for the actual characters, they don't have the fine polish of some of the more recent beat 'em ups and everything is very angular. It gives the game a certain anime feel, but it's not as well done as, say, something like *Soul Blade*.

Playing the game isn't the most exciting of experiences, either. The gameplay centres on the special moves, some of which can only be used at certain times, like when your over-drive gauge is flashing. This over-drive gauge shows how much energy (as opposed

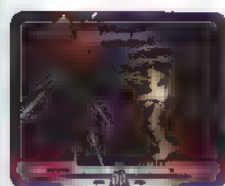
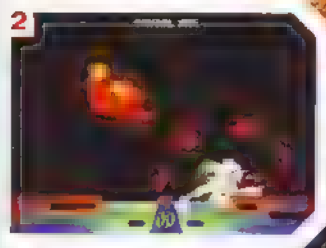


(1) Ellis lets rip again. (2) The overhead viewing angle is very good. None of the action's obscured and it's easy to fight from here. (3) Wait until you're sure that your opponent's in range and a Soul Bomb will be devastating.

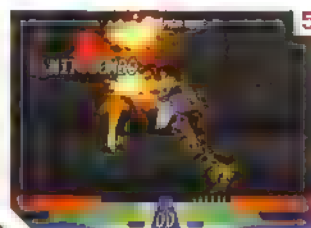
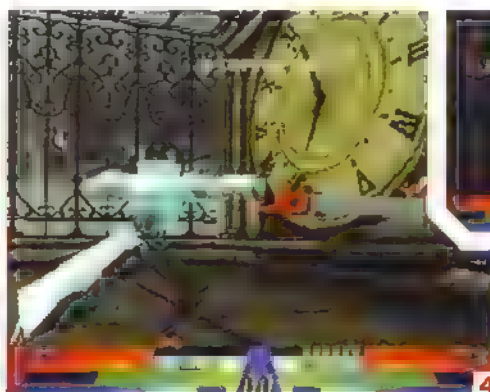




■ PUBLISHER:	SCE	■ DEVELOPER:	Takara
■ RELEASE DATE:	TBC	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ PRICE:	£39.99	■ STYLE:	3D beat 'em up



[1] When your opponents are in the air, keep whacking 'em for big combos. [2] Ellis's Soul Bomb is full of little lovehearts. Ahhh. [3] Very angular sword flashes. [4] David shows Ellis just how well he's polished his chainsaw. [5] Smash. Three combos are nothing amazing. Launch into a special move at the right time and you can expect combos in the twenties.



The sounds and graphics are marvellous, and there's plenty of challenge, but it doesn't make for an overly satisfying experience.

is going to get the full effect. They're not guaranteed, though, so use them wisely.

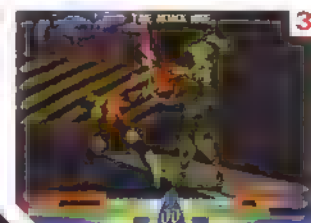
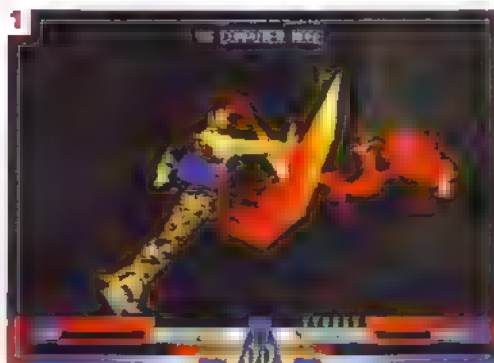
Toshinden 3 isn't a total disaster; it's just not the best of beat 'em ups either. The sounds and graphics especially the fighting effects during battle – are marvellous, and there's plenty of challenge in both one- and two-player modes, but it doesn't make for an overly satisfying experience. Despite the fact that you can pull off some decent moves when you want to, more often than not you'll launch into a 18-combo Rattle Snake attack purely by accident. It does look good, however, and you can rest assured that the combos launched by your mates are more the result of luck than judgment.

This game is marginally better than its prequel, but it still doesn't come anywhere near stealing *Tekken 2*'s crown. *Soul Blade* does the fighting effects better, too. The new *Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha* is looking brilliant – wait for our review of that before parting with your cash.



Alternatively...

<i>Tekken 2</i>	10/10	PSM1
<i>Soul Blade</i>	9/10	PSM1
<i>Tekken 3</i>	9/10	PSM1
<i>Star Gladiator</i>	8/10	PSM1
<i>Street Fighter Alpha 2</i>	8/10	PSM1
<i>BA Toshinden 2</i>	7/10	PSM1
<i>BA Toshinden 3</i>	7/10	PSM2



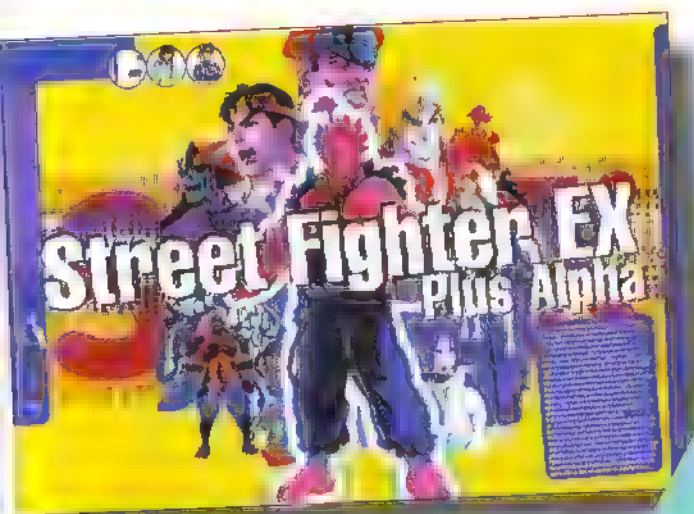
[1] *Toshinden 3*'s killer combos. [2] Tairi's little that small doesn't necessarily mean weak. [3] Softa's quick whip keeps Rachel at arm's length.

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Dramatic effects 7	■ GAMEPLAY: You'll surprise yourself a lot 6
■ SOUND	Great grunts and groans 7	■ PRESENTATION Surprisingly poor 4
■ LIFESPAN	Decent enough challenge 6	■ ORIGINALITY: Just for the Soul Bombs 2

THE Authority in PlayStation Gaming

It's here! The latest and greatest *Street Fighter* yet has been ripped apart in our massive 8-page *Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha* feature. Be the first to discover its might!



PLUS reviews of all the latest games. Including *The Lost World*, *PaRappa the Rapper*, *Toshinden 3*, *Xevious 3D*, *Hard Boiled*, *All Star Soccer*, *Ray Storm*, *Power Source* and *The King of the Fighters '95*.



FREE!

Every month *PlayStation Power* carries a FREE 68-page full-colour tips bible containing as many tips as the so-called tips mags!

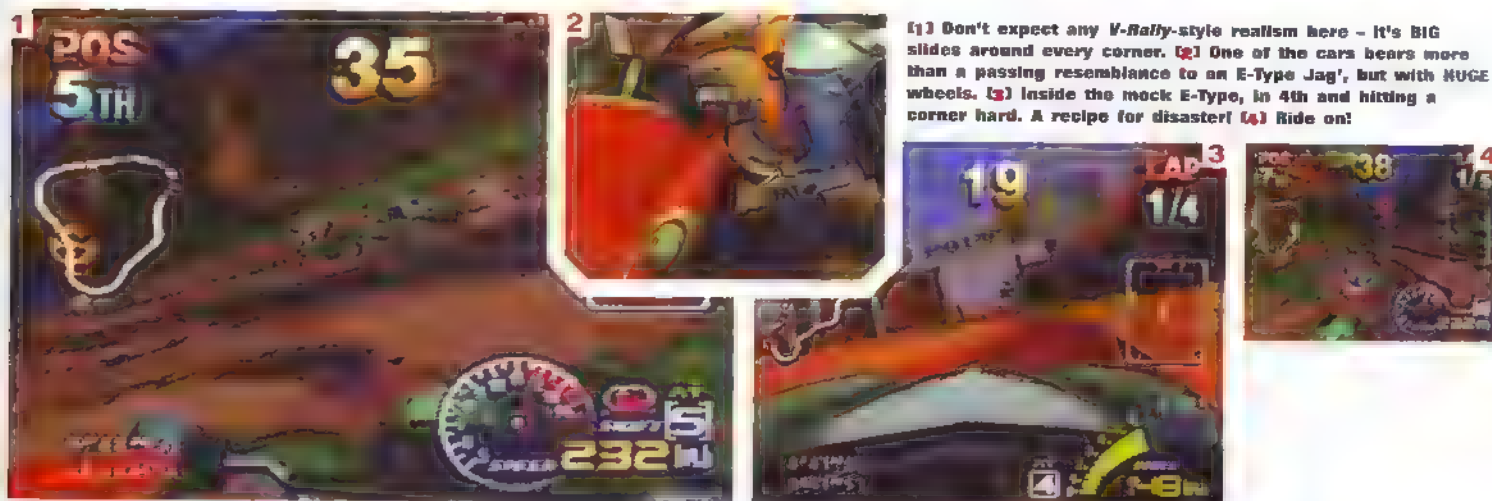


ON SALE NOW!

■ PUBLISHER: JM Interactive ■ DEVELOPER: Toka
 ■ RELEASE DATE: September ■ ORIGIN: France
 ■ PRICE: £34.99 ■ STYLE: Racing game



PlayTest



[1] Don't expect any *V-Rally*-style realism here - it's BIG slides around every corner. [2] One of the cars bears more than a passing resemblance to an E-Type Jag', but with HUGE wheels. [3] Inside the mock E-Type, in 4th and hitting a corner hard. A recipe for disaster! [4] Ride on!

Explosive Racing

Realism? Who wants realism in a racing game, when realism just isn't fun?

Toka opt for a new kind of driving challenge in their cartoon rapid racer

With the number of racing games available for the PlayStation reaching well into double figures, any attempt at developing a new one has to take into consideration some unique element that'll pull in the games-buying public, making them reach for your new title over the numerous well received games already available. *V-Rally*, still riding high in the games charts, managed this perfectly - it married a new genre of racing on Sony's machine with a car handling engine which demanded supreme competence on the part of the driver. *Rage Racer* managed it by riding on the coat-tails of its two predecessors, and no doubt *FI '97* shall manage it by doing the same.

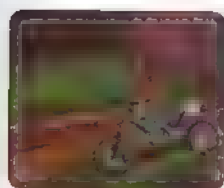
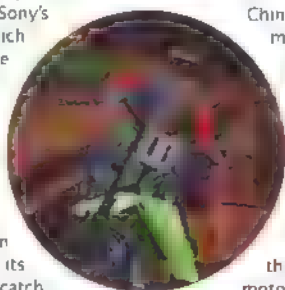
But *Explosive Racing* is something altogether different. Though strictly speaking the sequel to *Burning Road*, *ER* hasn't got a thoroughbred lineage upon which to base its marketing strategy. So its programmers had to find some other catch and to that end they've decided to pretty well neglect realism - usually seen as a must for most racing games - interjecting some simple slam bam fun to lift it above the crowd. Forget finding perfect racing angles around corners, and never braking in anything but a straight line; *Explosive Racing* is about keeping your thumb rooted firmly to the accelerator button and heaving your car, bike, or truck around some of the wildest race circuits you'll ever see.

What do we mean by wild? Just take the first course it's set in Scotland, so you can expect some fairly unpredictable weather, but within the space of a few minutes you see the climate change from fine into rain and finally into a God-awful storm. The course takes

you through winding country lanes and then into a graveyard (yes, on a four-car-wide race track), complete with cartoon-style ghosts which float over the tarmac. To make things slightly tricky, there are huge chunks of trees, and other debris, which scatter the circuit, forcing wild swerves and painful collisions on a most every bend. This isn't, as they say, for the fainthearted.

And Scotland's got nothing on the Wild West, China, San Francisco or the Antarctic, which make up the game's other four basic courses. Each is progressively cartoon like, progressively clichéd and, inevitably, increasingly tough. The courses to be tackled in this game, and indeed the whole style of the thing, is very much *Wacky Races* than it is *Grandstand Motorsport*, and this holds true even for the way the cars handle.

Driving (or indeed riding - remember, three of the six introductory vehicles are motorbikes) in *Explosive Racing* is a far from realistic experience. Now, many games implement the use of power-slides as a means of getting around corners - even though in reality this is a slower way of racing than the traditional brake-in-accelerate-out method - but *Explosive Racing* takes it to a ridiculous extreme. Cornering in this cartoon-racing world is ▶



It's about keeping your thumb

rooted firmly to the accelerator button

and heaving you around some

of the wildest circuits you'll ever see

PlayTest



(1) When it gets dark you don't have the luxury of lights. Oh dear. (2) Got it wrong and you're in trouble. Like, eight feet in the air, upside down. (3) Stopping off at the gift shop is not conducive to winning, evidently. (4) Another wipeout. (5) The Wild West track is described as of Medium difficulty. Yeah, right. (6) It's Easy in the glens, though.



You rarely have to brake or ease off the gas... so racing becomes a test of nerve and of luck, rather than a test of driving ability.

► power-sliding – there's no other way, unless you crawl around at a pace outdone by the most slothful of snails. And we're not talking little flick-outs of the back end here; we're talking several hundred-metre drifts around corners which you'd usually be able to floor with no fear of any rear-end malarkey.

This is no bad thing, of course, for in the context of the game it's all rather fun – screaming around corners with virtually no tyre grip is rather exhilarating, but it can make for some serious frustration levels, too.

There's not much skill involved in racing any of the vehicles in *Explosive Racing* – it's very much a case of going flat out and just avoiding the obstacles. You rarely have to brake or even ease off the gas, especially in the first two levels, and so racing becomes a test of nerve and of, well, luck, rather than a test of driving ability. If you're the kind of person who's going to be wound-up by this, then *Explosive Racing* is best avoided.

To compensate for the lack of driving 'experience', and to hike those fun levels, the game's developers have programmed a graphics engine which ensures a blindingly fast race. The graphics positively scream along, so reactions have to be spot-on to avoid on-street obstacles, if they can be avoided at all. Because the pace of the races is so extreme, until you really know the tracks, you're frequently placed in situations where there's no escape from crashes because you're

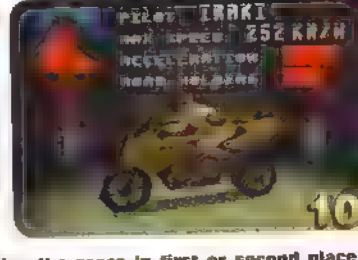


not given time to react. There's no middle-ground with *ER*: it's full-on, all of the time, and it shows no mercy.

But, again, this can be forgiven, because you know that realism is not of paramount importance here, and that having fun is what it's all about. And that's precisely what it is – to start with. But after a while that lack of realism and that element of luck over skill starts to pall, and *Explosive Racing* becomes somewhat less than a rewarding experience. This is not a game with longevity, despite the fact that there are six courses which can be played in three different ways (straight, reverse and mirror) once you've worked your way through the game.

In terms of game structure there's not much to write home about. You've got the Practice sessions, which enable you to have a blast around each of the tracks

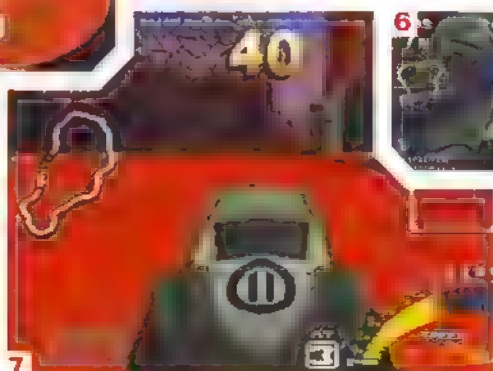
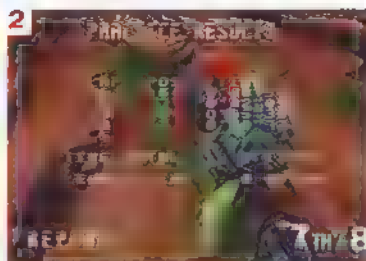
On yer bike!



There are a total of 14 vehicles available to you throughout the game – six to start, and then more to win by completing the races in first or second place. The bikes, though easily damaged, offer far better handling than the cars, especially in those frequent, hard corners.

Explosive Racing

[1] That's you that is. Nice chin. [2] The Practice sessions give you the chance to win the better cars. [3] A basic replay function shows you how well you performed (or, rather, how well you didn't). [4] You can just about make out the rain. Prepare for serious slides. [5] Bumps abound on the disused railtrack. [6] The over-the-handbars view is the easiest to handle when riding a bike. [7] The rare straights are a joy to race.



(though only the first two courses are 'open' initially). If you complete these in first or second place, you're rewarded with a further six vehicles to choose from. After completing the courses in Practice mode, you then progress to the Championship mode. This simply has you competing in each course after the other, and you've got to finish first or second in order to proceed - fail and you're booted out of the Championship and have to start a new game again (though there is a password system, should you wish to use it).

Win the Championship and you're rewarded with a big *Mad Max*-style, V-8 supercar to storm around the courses in mirror mode; should you manage to win the mirror mode Championship, you get yet another vehicle with which to tackle the tracks again (this time in reverse mode). So, in all, to win the game outright

In compensation for the lack of driving 'experience', the graphics engine measures blindingly fast and the graphics positively scream along.

you've got to tackle 18 stages with a total choice of 14 vehicles. Not an easy task.

Although there's a huge range of bikes, trucks and cars to race with, there's not a lot of difference between them. Each has an Acceleration and Road Holding ability which is scored out of six, and a Maximum Speed of around 250kph (about 170mph). Because everything slides around corners so much, though, it makes little odds which vehicle you choose - probably best to go for one of the high-acceleration bikes so you can pick up speed quickly after slowing down to tackle a corner. It's a shame, but the lack of variance among vehicles makes you rather indifferent to which one you drive/ride.

Explosive Racing isn't the next 'must have' racer in the way *V-Rally* was, despite its attempts to differ from the throngs of racers available, it doesn't present the right kind of challenges. By ditching the realism aspects and forcing you to slide around the tracks as if they were ice, the game hampers the fun aspect which it tries so hard to promote. Give it a go, but be warned, you'll tire of it inside of a week.

Alternatively...

<i>Rage Racer</i>	8.10	PSM
<i>V-Rally</i>	8.10	PSM
<i>F1 '97</i>	8.10	PSM
<i>Parasite Challenge</i>	8.0	PSM
<i>Explosive Racing</i>	6.10	PSM



[1] Another huge slide gets an opponent in trouble. [2] More of a replay - and proof that you really should be driving a lot faster.



Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 24

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS: Screaming fast but cartoony 7 ■ GAMEPLAY: Odd, Germanic commentator 6 ■ PRESENTATION: Bland 4 ■ LIFESPAN: Hard but ultimately dull 6 ■ ORIGINALITY: Oddball racer 7

Lacks realism 6
Bland 4
Oddball racer 7

Explosive Racing tries too hard to be different, ditching realism in favour of a fun factor which simply isn't there in the long term.

6

Super Pang Collection

Rather than seeing stars before one's eye, one sees nought but balls, and one has the feeling of being hit over the head without actually having been so. You've been *Panged!*

(1) The clock power-up in the green ball grants you extra time when it's shot. (2) The blocks don't fall - the balls bounce on them.



fiendishly tough... and the majority of

levels require serious thought

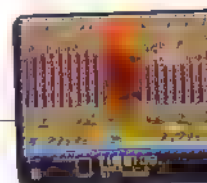
and definite strategy!

initially it seems pretty dull, especially when compared to other recent puzzle games such as *Super Puzzle Fighter 2 Turbo*.

But this initial indifference is rapidly replaced by an addictive urge which builds as you increase in prowess and start to get on to some of the more interesting, and cleverly designed screens. Walls (some of which can be shot) appear, making the balls bounce off at new angles; power-ups fall from the sky, enabling you to momentarily freeze the balls in mid-air or which increase the power and effectiveness of your harpoon weapon; and the pace of the action builds to heart-stopping rates as more and more balls fall from above. These three *Pang* games are fiendishly tough, and though someone watching you play would think the action entirely random, the majority of the levels require serious thought and definite strategy.

We're speaking here as if all three of the games were one, but to a certain extent this is true. The differences between the three titles is slight - the latter games use more interesting and attractive backdrops to the screens, and introduce characters for you to play.

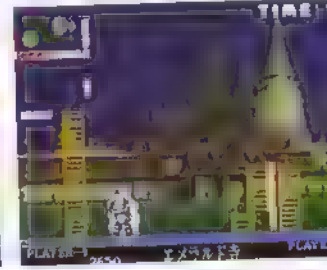
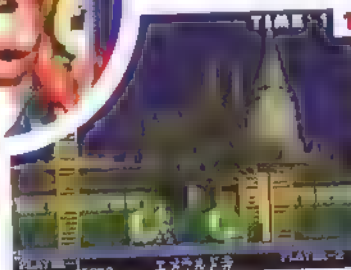
They also introduce crystals that fall or float as well as the stock, bouncing balls. But, in essence, every level from each of these three games uses the same precepts and the same gaming style. If you've played *Lemmings* and then *Oh No More Lemmings* you'll know what we mean - the two more



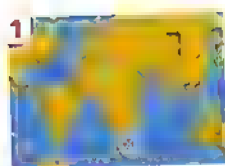
It would be cynical to suggest that taking a bunch of old arcade games and releasing them as a collection on the PlayStation is merely a means of making a marginal profit, and not a genuine concern that gamers using the latest hardware technology want to play technically inferior games on their systems. But as we are far from cynical - merely critical - we won't make such a scurrilous suggestion; we'll put on our nostalgia hats, load the most recent volume of older arcade games - *Super Pang Collection* - and enjoy some classic gaming action.

Comprising of *Pomping World*, *Super Pang* and *Pang 3*, and spanning just six years between 1989 and 1995, *Super Pang Collection* is an action puzzle game on a grand scale - there are dozens of screens of bouncing balls to clear. The concept of the game is incredibly simple: you run around the bottom of the screen (which doesn't scroll at all), shooting balls which drop from the sky, and then proceed to bounce around like mad things. Each time you shoot one of the balls, it splits into two smaller balls and, yep, shoot those smaller balls and they also split into two - from the large, original ball, you usually end up having to shoot 16 balls in total.

The screen, given its limited size, rapidly fills up, so you must choose whether to adopt the 'all guns blazing' attitude and shoot at everything in sight, or take your time to pick off individual balls to prevent the game becoming too frantic. Bear in mind that if a ball touches you, you lose a life, so you've got to be nimble on your feet to last long. This game is a rare thing these days: it's a points scoring game, and scoring points and clearing screens is pretty well all it's about. There's no plot, no discernable overall objective, and



(1) In order to complete this screen you've got to climb the ladders into otherwise restricted areas. (2) Waiting for a power-up which makes you invulnerable for a while takes the heat off when climbing.



(1) Travel the globe to complete the game - each level has an appropriate 'flavour'. (2) Playing *Pang* for too long makes your eyes widen, it seems.

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 24

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:
■ SOUND:
■ LIFESPAN:

Look as old as they are 4
Blip-blop 4
Dozens of levels 7

■ GAMEPLAY:

Strangely addictive 7
Very Japanese 3
It was back in 1989 6

■ PRESENTATION:

It's old and it looks it, though the games which comprise this collection are highly playable and addictive. Worth a look, but it won't hold your attention for ever.

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■ PUBLISHER:	Ocean	■ DEVELOPER:	Capcom
■ RELEASE DATE:	TBC	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ PRICE:	TBC	■ STYLE:	Action puzzler

Two-player *Pang* isn't competitive.

you help each other to clear screens, rather

than trying to make your

opponent's life harder.



recent games are more like expansion packs for the first, rather than new games in their own right.

This, though, is certainly forgivable, for **the first game is indeed a classic, and it has a formula so simple it would be a sin to change it.** And given that you're getting all three on one disc, who's to complain? Think of them as one long game with at least a 100 levels and you're laughing.

As with many similar arcade games, the *Pang* titles are all two-player compatible – indeed, these games really only come into their own when there are two of you playing, desperately trying not to get in each others' way, coming up with strategies in order to survive the increasingly tricky levels. Two-player *Pang* is not competitive; you help each other to clear screens, rather than trying to make your opponent's life harder as in *Puzzle Fighter*, the only competitive element being the scoring of points. Two-player *Pang* is fun rather than frustrating, though it probably won't appeal to those of you with a more competitive bent.

Although the idea is simple, and this is hardly a title that pushes the PlayStation, *Super Pang Collection* is an interesting diversion. It's not a 'must have' game in the way that *Puzzle Fighter* most certainly is, but it's worth getting hold of if you've a penchant for retro gaming and enjoy a challenge which tests your grey stuff as much as your ability to waggle your fingers with extreme effectiveness.



Alternatively...

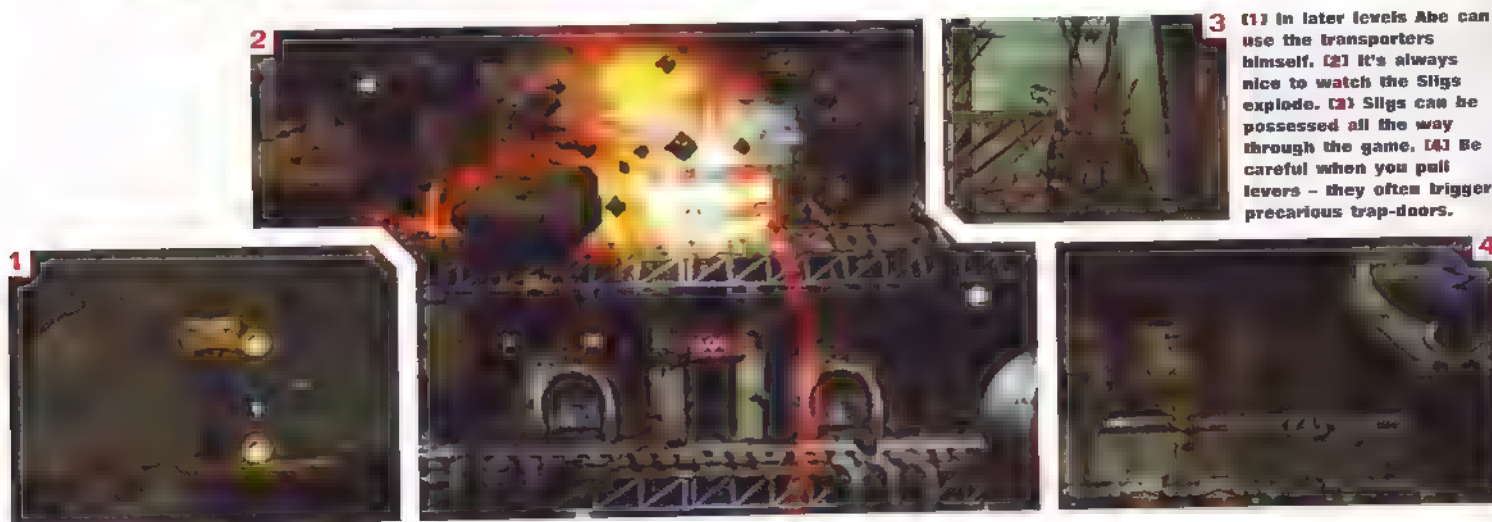
<i>Best A Move 2</i>	9/10	PC98
<i>Super Puzzle Fighter</i>	9/10	PSM26
<i>Karoshi</i>	8/10	PSM24
<i>Super Pang Collection</i>	6/10	PSM24



[1] Yes all very tasteful, though it's not as if there's a great deal happening on this, the first of the *Pang 3* levels. [2] The orange crystals are every bit as deadly as the red balls, and they move more erratically.

COME GET SOME

NOVEMBER 1997



(1) In later levels Abe can use the transporters himself. (2) It's always nice to watch the Sligs explode. (3) Sligs can be possessed all the way through the game. (4) Be careful when you pull levers - they often trigger precarious trap-doors.

Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee

Believe it or not, the platform game is back - with a vengeance. It can be an odd world sometimes, can't it?



Platform games, eh? Surely a genre at the end of its natural lifespan? Especially those two dimensional ones, and even more especially the 'flick screen' style - much beloved by programmers and gamers alike when the Commodore 64 was the height of computer game sophistication. But now? In a world with *Resident Evil*, *Tomb Raider*, and their ilk? When even Nintendo have switched to 3D for the latest outing of their brain-crushingly cute little Italian plumber? Nah, the platform game has surely had its day.

At least that's what we thought. Then along comes the first game in the much lauded and just as much hyped *Oddworld* series. And guess what? It's a platform game - a two-dimensional, flick screen platform game. And it's very, very good indeed.

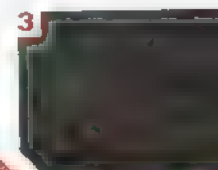
Abe's Oddysee casts you as the young Mudokon of the title. Like many of your race on *Oddworld*, you worked as a slave in the vast Rupture Farms food processing plant, scrubbing floors and trying to avoid being beaten by the Slig guards. Then you stumbled into a restricted area of the factory, and discovered that not only were your people being used as slave labour, they were also due to be on the menu themselves. Horrified, you made the obvious choice and decided to get the hell out of Rupture.

So begins arguably the best 2D platformer ever. At the start of the game, you must guide Abe through the vast Rupture Farms in an effort to escape and avoid becoming dinner. Along the way, though, you discover that fate has chosen you to be the hero, chosen one

the Mudokon who will free his people from slavery and overthrow the evil reign of Molluck the Glukkon, despotic dictator of *Oddworld*. If you can survive long enough, that is.

At its core, *Abe's Oddysee* is a fairly typical platform game. You move Abe around, jumping over gaps, climbing up and down levels, and so on. So what makes it so great, then? Well, the problem when trying to describe what's so good about *Abe's Oddysee* is where to start. Almost every aspect of the game is so slick, polished and damn playable.

For want of a better place, then, we'll start with the graphics. Put simply, *Abe's Oddysee* is stunning. Every single screen (and there are hundreds) has obviously been lavished with the same degree of care and attention - which is to say, an awful lot. All of the backgrounds have been pre-rendered, featuring imaginative designs, great attention to detail, and a unique, slightly quirky style. On top (and behind) of this sit the characters themselves. Not only are all the characters and creatures in *Abe's Oddysee* brilliantly designed, they're also so brilliantly animated Abe himself has hundreds of frames devoted to him, and it shows - the range of



(1) Ah, the sign of success. It's always a joy to see one of your mates escape to freedom. (2, 3) A couple of examples of the marvellous scenery.

Both the in-game sound and graphics are complemented by some of the slickest presentation ever.

■ PUBLISHER:	GT Interactive	■ DEVELOPER:	Oddworld Inhabitants
■ RELEASE DATE:	October	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ PRICE:	£44.99	■ STYLE:	Platform adventure

Abe the agile

Throughout his Odyssey, Abe is faced with a staggering variety of locations, puzzles, dangers, and goals. Luckily for him, he's a versatile little chap, with an equally staggering range of moves and abilities. Indeed it is this realistic range of functions that Abe can perform which really endears the little fella to you. He's a platform character of many talents...



Walk

Abe's basic mode of locomotion. Handy for, erm, walking around.



Run

For when a little more haste is required, and to make bigger jumps.



Sneak

If you can't kill 'em, sometimes you just have to avoid 'em.



Hide

Lurking in the shadows is a good way to avoid the Sligs.



Jump

Abe can jump straight up, or leap to either side.



Crouch

Good for hiding behind cover, and picking things up.



Roll

Handy for dodging bullets and getting through small gaps.



Holst

Abe can jump and pull himself up, drop down, or pull ropes.



Throw

Abe can throw stuff about, distracting Sligs and Slogs.



Ride

Once he finds his trusty steed, Elum, Abe can ride about in style.



Push

Handy for moving things out of the way, or into the right spot.



Use

A multi-purpose ability, handy for pulling levers, throwing switches and more.



Talk

Abe can talk to other Mudokons, and get them to follow his orders.



Chant

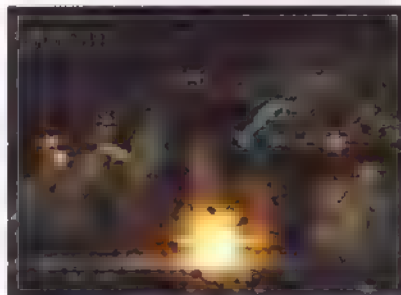
By using his mystic power, Abe can activate teleporters and possess Sligs.

DAMN I'M GOOD

NOVEMBER 1997

PlayTest

One of the good things about Abe is he comes with unlimited lives, so you needn't worry about trying anything out of the ordinary - it might just work. The only thing the test below proved is how far Abe's body parts are flung when he explodes.



Not only is this a test of your joystick manipulation, it's also a test of your brain. Some of the most fiendish game design ever is tucked away here...

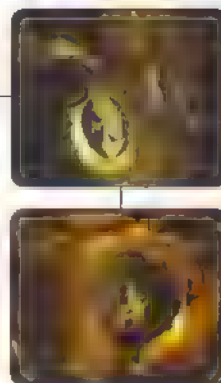
► movements and actions he can perform is seemingly limitless. Despite this, none of the other creatures are any less impressive. Ali are just as smooth and just as cleverly done.

Combined with this visual delight is the sound. All of the effects are spot on, from the throaty autofire of the Sigs' guns - complete with the tink of shell casings hitting the floor - to the annoyed 'Hurrump' that Abe makes as he gets up after you've run him full pelt into a wall. And just for a change, none of them are ruined by strident, repetitive background 'music'. Instead, *Abe's Oddysee* features a subtle, atmospheric score that's dynamic, changing to represent the current situation without ever interfering with the gameplay itself.

Both the in-game sound and graphics are complemented perfectly by some of the slickest

presentation ever. The cut scenes never interfere with the gameplay, but blend in seamlessly - many actually run straight in and out of the action. Enter a transport pod to another part of the factory on the first level, for example, and the camera zooms into the screen, following the pod as it swings along on its gimbal, spins around, and then backs into the next stop. At which point the camera pans back, and you're playing the game - the pre-rendered backdrops have been used as the start and end of the even more stunning pre-rendered sequences, so they each merge into the other almost unnoticeably. Great while all this is, though, it's still not what makes *Abe's Oddysee* so superb. That comes down to the gameplay itself.

To start with, the control system is straightforward and intuitive, taking moments to pick up, but allowing for a wide variety of different possibilities. The result is that Abe is responsive and easy to get to grips with. Better yet, the way he moves a step at a time puts paid to all that pixel-perfect positioning nonsense that's been the bane of the platform game since computer games were invented. In *Abe's Oddysee*, either you're in the right place or you're a step away from it. It's not



Oddworld: odd people

In your journey through Oddworld, you come face to face with a wide variety of weird and wonderful races and creatures...



Mudokons

These are Abe's people, enslaved by the evil Molluck and used as menial workers in the vast Rupture Farms factory. Only the chosen one can save them from their horrible fate - and that's Abe.



Elum

Abe's 'pet', a dinosaur-like creature that looks ugly and smells worse. Still, he's incredibly loyal to Abe, and can run and jump a lot further. He's also particularly partial to honey. And in a way he's quite cute.



Sligs

Cruel, brutal and heavily armed, the Sligs act as guards and slave masters for Molluck. Luckily they're not too bright, and Abe can possess them with his newly gained mystical powers to great effect.



Paramites

Once, long ago, the Paramites were sacred to the Mudokons. Now they're harvested in their thousands and turned into pies at Rupture Farms. On their own they're not too bad - but in a pack they're evil.



Scrabs

Like the smaller Paramites, Scrabs are being slaughtered in their thousands to feed the voracious appetite of Rupture Farms. Even their ancestral breeding area, a vast and ancient temple, is under threat.



Slogs

A Slig's best friend is his Slog. Their masters aren't exactly loveable, but Slogs are even nastier. And even more stupid. Their key weakness is their own vicious nature - Slogs attack each other on sight.



Molluck the Glukkon

The evil mastermind behind Rupture Farms, the enslavement of the Mudokons, the slaughter of the Scrabs and Paramites, and lots of other nasty stuff. Fate has chosen Abe to stop him.

Official UK
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Magazine 24

GRAPHICS:

Redefines the genre 9

GAMEPLAY:

Oozing from every pore 9

SOUND:

Quirky effects, subtle music 8

PRESENTATION:

Super slick 9

LIFESPAN:

Huge levels, cunning puzzles 9

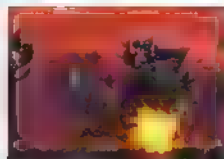
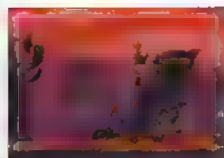
ORIGINALITY:

Loads of great ideas 8

Quite possibly the ultimate platform game - gorgeous to look at, packed with cleverness and neat ideas, a joy to play, and fiendishly addictive.

9
out of 10

Oddworld



With some forethought nasty traps can be set for your enemies as they chase you across Oddworld. On this occasion, your enemy fails to see a mine just before he puts his foot on it. Not a nice sight, believe us.



that some parts of the game don't require split second timing and fluid joypad skills – they do. It's just that it's not maddeningly prissy about everything.

What's more, the level design makes great use of Abe's flexibility, presenting you with some fantastic possibilities. All of which is then taken advantage of by the actual puzzles and tasks themselves.

It's here that *Abe's Oddysee* really shines, for it features some of the most cunning and intelligent puzzles ever. You have infinite lives in this game – simply returning to the last 'save spot' when you die. *Abe's Oddysee* is not simply a test of your joypad manipulation, then, it's also a demanding test of your brain. There's some of the most fiendish game design ever tucked away here, and it's simply a joy to behold. These puzzles aren't simply hard (although many are), they're so clever that you just have to appreciate them. Oddworld inhabitants, the developers, have pulled out every trick in the platform game book, thrown in a variety from other genres, and given everything a slightly wacky spin to create one of the most challenging and yet addictive games around.

Even more impressive, in some ways, is the non-linear structure of the game. Although you are guided towards certain goals and, of course, the end of each level, which puzzles you solve and which you decide to leave is largely up to you. Many can even be dealt with in a number of different ways, depending on how your brain works and how imaginative you are.

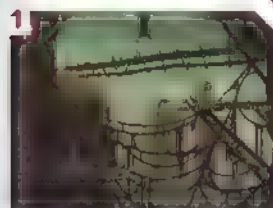
Little of this would be possible if it weren't for the Aware Lifeforms In Virtual Environments system used by the game. This Artificial Intelligence routine controls the actions of all of the creatures in the game, according to their specific type and situation. Ignoring the somewhat contrived name, A.L.I.V.E. is a very clever system, and the reason why so many of the puzzles in *Abe's Oddysee* are dynamic, making great use of the other characters. **You can sneak past Slig guards, trick Slogs into fighting each other, talk to other Mudokons and get them to do what you want them to, even possess other creatures and control them directly – using a Slig guard to gun down his friends and then throwing him into an electric fence is strangely satisfying, that's for sure.**

So, just when it looked like the platform game might be on its last legs, *Abe's Oddysee* has arrived to save it. This game redefines the humble platformer, dragging it up to previously unforeseeable heights and presenting the PlayStation with another instant classic. It does have to be said that the game can be frustrating at times, but the incredible sense of satisfaction more than makes up for it. Let's hope the next Oddworld game can match up to this.



Alternatively...

<i>Abe's Oddysee</i>	9/10	PSX24
<i>Crash Bandicoot</i>	9/10	PSX10
<i>Demolition Man</i>	8/10	PSX14



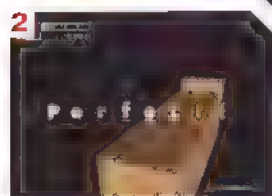
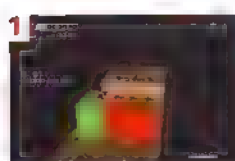
[1] It truly is a slick-looking game. [2] There are loads of useful boards giving you tips to help you through the tricky bits. You'll learn to love them.

HAIL TO THE KING, BABY

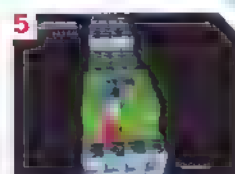
NOVEMBER 1997

Kurushi

Is anybody apart from the Japanese ever going to come up with an idea for a PlayStation puzzle game?



(1) the more blocks you blow up at once, the more points you score. (2) Blow up all the blocks except the black ones (and avoid being crushed) and you get a perfect. This adds a row to your platform. (3) Now that's mass destruction. Allow yourself a smug, self-congratulatory smile if you ever do this well. (4) This looks like trouble - the end is nigh. (5) Grrr. Totally Kurushed (sorry). (6) The game doesn't have all that much variation.



Kurushi's programmers must have been having terrible nightmares. It's the only way you could explain the weird scenario they dreamt up for what would otherwise appear to be a very ordinary puzzle game.

A man called Elliot is trapped in an alien landscape and, bizarrely armed with only a portable detonator and an endless supply of dynamite, will be crushed by the blocks rolling towards him unless he blows them up. He has a limited amount of time to do this because the blocks roll inexorably forward and the platform he is trapped on is very definitely finite. If the blocks reach the end without him blowing a way through them, he will be either crushed or plummet off the edge. It's about now that you think you should wake up screaming, but no - for actually *Kurushi* is really good fun.

It takes quite a while to learn how to solve the puzzles that each set of rolling blocks presents. At first you'll be dying senselessly as you attempt to turn back the inevitable block tide, but slowly and surely the game begins to make sense.

It all works like this: In any given set of blocks that come rolling down, there are three different types. The first - the 'ordinary ones' - can be blown up by your dashing little man. Simply guide him to a square, press the X button (at which point the square lights up), wait until the block you want to destroy has rolled over your highlighted square, press X again, and it's obliterated in a flash of light. The second kind of block - the 'black ones' - are special. You can blow them up, but if you

manage to avoid doing so while at the same time destroying all the others, you get a bonus score and an extension to your platform (which gives you more time to deal with each round of blocks). The third and final type of block are the green ones. When you blow up one of these it leaves a green tile behind. Pressing Circle blows up the green tile, which destroys anything within a 3x3 square around it.

We've gone to the lengths of explaining exactly how the game works so that you can understand how clever and enjoyable *Kurushi* is. Because, let's face it, if you just looked at the intimidatingly dull-looking screenshots, you'd be hard pressed to know why the game has sold over half a million in Japan.

You see, there's an almost infinite number of ways of dealing with any particular set of *Kurushi* blocks that are tumbling towards you. You can dash about and

As good as you get, there's always more of a challenge to come. That's what makes *Kurushi* one of those compelling games.

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:

Nothing special 6

■ GAMEPLAY:

Superb 8

■ SOUND:

Ordinary 5

■ PRESENTATION:

Straightforward 5

■ LIFESPAN

Elephantine 8

■ ORIGINALITY

Nightmarish 8

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine

Kurushi is a superb and enthralling puzzle game that only falls short of a higher mark because its two-player game doesn't work that well.

8
out of 10

PUBLISHER:	SCEE	DEVELOPER:	Sony Japan
RELEASE DATE:	Out now	ORIGIN:	Japan
PRICE:	£29.99	STYLE:	Puzzle game



[1] Well, we've managed to avoid being crushed. But it looks fairly unlikely that we'll manage to destroy all the blocks before they reach the end. [2] The animation of the blocks disintegrating is pretty funky - they certainly look like you've thoroughly destroyed them, eh?

try to destroy them one at a time - a tactic that'll get you through the first two levels, but no further - or you can use the green blocks to blow up huge swathes of blocks, which will end in tears as you destroy the precious black blocks you're trying to save. As you play the game, though, you learn how to use the two basic techniques in tandem to carve your way through the blocks. Before you know it, you're getting pretty skilful even to the extent of showing off. A quick dash in here with your man, a well-timed flick of the X followed by a tap of the Circle and another quick dash of your man and you can have finished a puzzle that appeared intimidating. And as good as you get, there's always more of a challenge to come. That's what makes *Kurushi* one of those compelling, must-have another-go games.

There are eight levels in all, each presenting you with increasingly complex patterns. More deviously, there are also five difficulty levels, each of which just cranks up the speed of the game a notch. At the highest level the blocks are moving almost continuously, and you have to be damn quick to effectively finish a level.

The only drawback to *Kurushi* is the two-player game which, rather than have two competing on-screen in the exciting fashion of, say, *Super Puzzle Fighter II* has a fairly lame take-it-in-turns approach. So if you solve a puzzle, and your friend then has a go and fails, you win. A better way of competing is to play the one player game as well as you can, then record the IQ score that you're given when the game's over. Then you can compare scores with any rival and have a definitive answer as to who's best.



Alternatively...

Best A Movie 2	6/10	PSMR
Super Puzzle Fighter II	9/10	PSM20
Kurushi	8/10	PSM24



[1] Frankly, we're running out of things to say about these pictures. *Kurushi* may not look great, but it plays really well. [2] Now that was a crafty bit of block carving. [3] Once you get to this point, it becomes pretty easy.

3
DOGS
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PUBLISHER: Ocean DEVELOPER: Koei
 RELEASE DATE: November ORIGIN: Japan
 PRICE: £44.99 STYLE: 3D beat 'em up

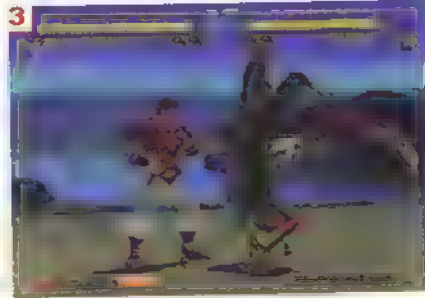


PlayTest

Dynasty Warriors

Shunning fancy sword flashes and elaborate special moves, Ocean get back to basics as they enter the over-populated beat 'em up fray

(1) A smack with a sword like that is likely to send anyone into a backflip. (2) Man with pointy stick meets girl with maracas. (3) Maracas girl distracts pointy stick man during the Samba.



a full-on, 3D polygonal beat 'em up

Although the recent trend in beat 'em ups has been to have impressive sword flashes, combo bonuses and ever more special moves invoked by impossibly tricky button sequences, *Dynasty Warriors* sticks with the basics: good moves with a few hidden ones that can be pulled off by learning relatively short button sequences, good graphics and solid gameplay. Almost everything's been thought of and has a gameplay point. For example, when the chap shouts 'Fight' and both players go at it simultaneously, there's a short sequence of sword clashes. The player who then reacts most vigorously during the sequence wins the mini-contest.

Dynasty Warriors introduces a dozen pugilists to the arena (not a single one in a short skirt) and includes the slew of gaming options one has come to expect ▶

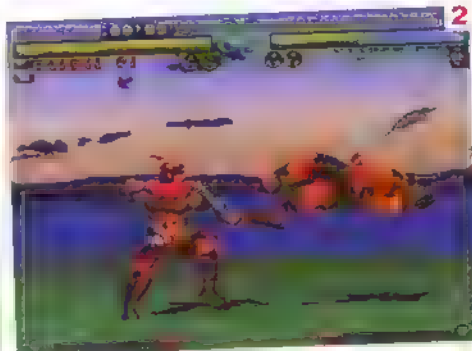
China was a lawless place 1,800 years ago, following the collapse of the Eastern Han Dynasty. When evil warlord Dong Zhuo declared himself Prime Minister in an attempt to rule the country (good starting point), the rulers of the three major provinces - Lui Bei in Shu, Sun Quan in Wu and Cao Cao in Wei (according to *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel* by Luo Guanzhong) - form an alliance to overthrow the PM. At the same time, they strive to establish their own provinces as the most powerful in the hope of uniting the people under a new dynasty. And then it kicks off big time. Which, as luck would have it, becomes the perfect scenario for



(1) The sparks fly as a thrust is effectively parried. (2) Another effective block, this time against the man with metal bars and strange dress sense. (3) Sometimes a big battle axe can be no match for a swift sword. (4) There's a wonderful intro sequence showing each of the warriors in battle and how they come to be recruited by their masters.



PlayTest



(1) Each battle takes place at one of seven historical battle sites and at various times of the day (midnight is possibly the most visually impressive). **(2)** *Dynasty Warriors* retains many elements of classic PlayStation beat 'em ups. **(3)** Learning to differentiate between a thrust and a strike is key to defending well. **(4)** Dian Wei's Chi (as indicated by the small meter at the bottom of the screen). **(5)** Although the camera angle does move around as the action dictates, the game is usually viewed side-on.

The Warriors

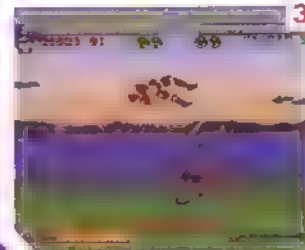
Each of the game's characters is given a brief history, for example, Diao Chan (pronounced "Dow Chan") is apparently a patriotic maiden of exquisite beauty who single-handedly destroyed the tyrant PM, Dong Zhuo. She's a bit old these days, though, because she

was born in 176 AD. Xiahou Dun (Shao Dun) was Cao Cao's cousin. Dian Wei (Dean Way) has the nickname "Evil Comes" and Guan Yu was so well thought of after his death that shrines were built in his honour. As for Sun Shang Xian - we're not giving anything away...



Dynasty Warriors

[1] In one-player mode your fighter can take anyone on, but in Team Battle mode, characters from the same clan won't fight each other. [2] In Endurance mode you must fight as many characters as possible, with just a small amount of energy replenishment between each fight. [3] A special move is executed and the Iron Bars chap is in for some serious damage.



There isn't any massively superior character so whoever you choose will have their unique advantages and disadvantages. The chaps with the big pointy sticks tend to suffer if you get close in. Those with the smaller weapons are faster and can pull off easier special moves, and those with the really powerful weapons – the chap with the big ball on a stick – will be vulnerable to attack at other times. One of this guy's special moves involves him jumping on his ball like a pogo stick, and if he gets a hit on you when you're down it can really smart. But counteract the manoeuvre and he can lose a lot of energy.

Dynasty Warriors doesn't quite have the subtlety of a *Tekken 2* and for more fancy sword flashes you're better off with *Soul Blade*. Yet it's an excellent all-round performer, crisp in the visual department and keen of punch and kick.



► of the genre; one/two player, battle mode. You know.

As in *Tekken 2*, patience and timing are rewarded when you're attempting to register points over your opponents. You can go barrelling in and pound away on the joy pad, hoping to pull something off, and sometimes it will work, but more often than not you'll lose to the more skilled player. Players can also pull off special Musou Attacks – a small meter at the base of the screen measures your Chi and when it's flashing you can pull off an extra special move or three. There is an option to turn these off, however, which is handy when you're still learning the basics, because the computer opponents know exactly when to go into one of these attacks, while us humans find it tricky to

Dynasty Warriors doesn't quite have

the subtlety of a *Tekken 2*, yet it's crisp in

the visual department and

keen of punch and kick.

get the timing right at first. Then there's the very satisfying bash, bash, bash and bash 'em again sequence when a KO's scored, too, which is always good for completely crushing your opponent's moral at the end of a tight bout.

Learning to defend well is another area that requires study. Whether your opponent thrusts or strikes at you (go to the practice option and the game shows you how to learn the difference between the two) there's a specific form of defence – parry thrusts or run through (side step to you and me) strikes. Get it right and your opponent becomes unbalanced and vulnerable. This makes for some very tactical battles between fighters who know how to both attack and defend properly, turning the game into something more skilful than your average beat 'em up.



[1] After the replay of the knockout strike, each character pulls a different kind of pose. Very gratifying. Unless you've just lost, in which case you must hit 'Start' as soon as possible and try to avenge your defeat.

[2] The background here looks not unlike many seen before in prominent PlayStation beat 'em ups, particularly the original version of *Tekken*. Thankfully, *Dynasty Warriors* matches many in its gameplay, too.

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine

GRAPHICS:

Understated but stylish 7

GAMEPLAY:

Keeps your attention 8

Lacks the frantic manic action of something like *Soul Blade* but it certainly fights better than most. Doesn't quite beat the brilliant *Tekken 2*, though.

SOUND

Nothing outstanding 6

PRESENTATION:

Smart FMV sequences 7

LIFESPAN:

One-player options aplenty 8

ORIGINALITY:

Brings nothing new 7

8
out of 10



PUBLISHER:

Maxis

DEVELOPER:

RELEASE DATE:

September

ORIGIN:

PRICE:

£44.99

STYLE:

Footie



(1) Kick Off is one of the most comprehensive football games for the PlayStation. (2) Hop to the cones for a practice session. (3) Visually, it lacks the finesse of the really top-notch titles. (4) Here's the action from the TV-style camera angle. (5) Can't quite make out what that says...

Kick Off 97

Yes, another footie sim. Is this one pushing the boundaries of total, fluid, virtual football? Or is it pushing its luck?

Even relatively poor PlayStation football sides have their strengths. At *Kick Off 97* it's their coaching set-up – coaching which even Glen Hoddle would be impressed by, concentrating as it does on young players' skills rather than on organisation and fitness.

At other clubs the only coaching available is a kick around between two of you, or a two-player game by yourself. But at *Kick Off 97*'s school of excellence, organised training sessions on penalties, corners, free kicks, crossing, dribbling and shooting are on the menu. You can also create your own dream team of real players (complete with stats), create your own league and cup competitions, play in any Premiership, European or international tournaments – and set it all up pretty easily. Yes, all credit to the club: it's well organised from the boardroom to the bathroom.

But all this doesn't equal a great side, and for all the hours they've put in on the training park *Kick Off 97*'s game still has a way to go. The players look a bit small and scruffy (in need of some fitness training, actually) and their stadium is far from impressive. And the players – despite being quick, spirited sprites (though not as quick as those in *Soccer 97*) and easy to manoeuvre – fail to deliver anything we haven't seen before. Plus they lack those instinctive special touches which really



(1) Even *ISS Pro* didn't roll in with a rendered introductory sequence. (2) A quick dash, evade a flying two-footed challenge and cross for a goal.

make a wonderful football simulation. It means that although anyone can have a perfectly good game of football with *Kick Off 97* (the shooting and goal scoring is indeed very realistic) it is unlikely to keep you hooked for very long.

With so many soccer sims on the market, it's difficult for this magazine to recommend any but the very best of them. Unfortunately *Kick Off 97* belongs to that clutch of PlayStation clubs who are quick, efficient and can pick up points even against the big boys, but who also lack the quantity in depth to really challenge for the major prizes.



Alternatively...

<i>ISS Pro</i>	9/10	PSM10
<i>Active Soccer</i>	9/10	PSM9
<i>Adidas Power Soccer</i>	8/10	PSM10
<i>Olympic Soccer</i>	7/10	PSM9
<i>All Star Soccer</i>	6/10	PSM12
<i>Kick Off 97</i>	6/10	PSM14

VERDICT

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 24

GRAPHICS:

Pretty poor 4

GAMEPLAY:

No frills 6

SOUND:

Average 5

PRESENTATION:

Credit to the game 9

LIFESPAN:

Early cup exit 4

ORIGINALITY:

Err... 1

It's a shame to have to mark any footie game low because they're all good fun, in their own way. But the competition is such that this effort is decidedly mid-table.

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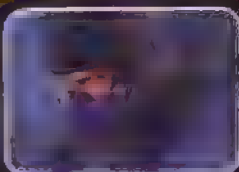
SONY SEGA NINTENDO ARCADE PC

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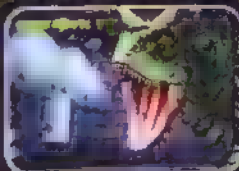
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REVIEWED!

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■ PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts ■ DEVELOPER: Dreamworks
 ■ RELEASE DATE: September ■ ORIGIN: UK
 ■ PRICE: £44.99 ■ STYLE: Platform game



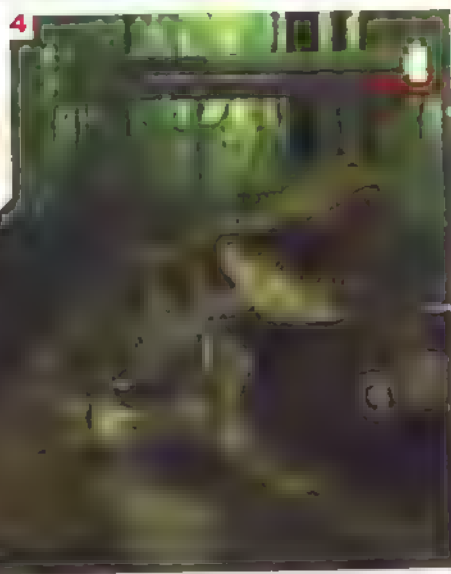
PlayTest

Lost World: Jurassic Park

It flaunts a huge licence and parades outstanding graphics... But with gameplay that belies its presentation, this *Lost World* becomes a lost cause



(1) Compy moves of his own free will - It is often difficult to tell if you're controlling his movements or not. (2) What's that in the sky? (3) The eye in the top corner shows your level of instinct. This dictates how well you do in fights - how hard you are and the damage you give. (4) The T-Rex level is the most fun to play - just because it's easier to eat things.

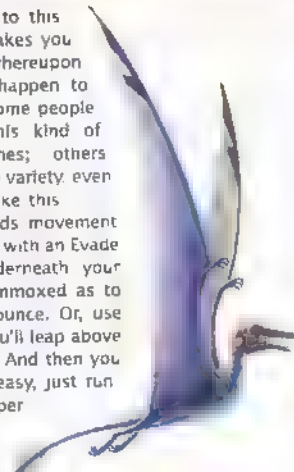


This may come as no great surprise to experienced players, but EA are releasing a big licence game that isn't as good as it looks. That's not too harsh a criticism in itself, because if *Lost World* played as well as it promised, it would be a challenger for the best PlayStation game to date - some of the animation is truly top class. But EA have gone to extremes here, as you'd discover if you ever master the awkward controls. It is, of course, always more disappointing to find that there isn't nearly as much to a game as its presentation would lead you to expect, especially whenever that presentation is as excellent as it is here. But there really is very little here beyond the graphics.

The controls don't come naturally, which makes it even more annoying to have to spend time and effort, not to mention £40, re-learning which buttons do what. A perfect example is the art of dodging your foes. To evade an enemy, use the 'Evade' button. It sounds straightforward and logical, but you can't just quickly move away from the enemy like you can in other games. This tactic only turns your dino around and shows the enemy your back, which is all ribs and tender meat. And in *Lost World* that's too tempting a proposition for even the most dedicated vegetarian dinosaur. Try using the Evade button after making that instinctive mistake and you'll only succeed in backing into your attacker, inviting him to take another big chunk out of your tasty haunches.



It takes a long time to get used to this button and each failed lesson takes you back to the start of the level, whereupon exactly the same things happen to you in the same order. Some people seem to get off on this kind of repetition in games; others demand a little more variety, even from a platformer like this. Use a downwards movement first in combination with an Evade and you'll roll underneath your opponent, leaving them flummoxed as to your whereabouts. Then you pounce. Or, use an upwards motion with Evade and you'll leap above them. In a peacock's pose of bravado. And then you pounce. Alternatively, if you want it easy, just run straight into them, eat them and scarper in the general direction of the exit before their mates come looking for you. As soon as you realise that ▶



If *Lost World* played as well as it looks, it would be a challenger for the best PlayStation game. Some of the animation is truly top class.

PlayTest



[1] Try to avoid walking through electrically charged fences, even if you are bigger and tougher than your average cow. [2] T-Rex spies a double dinner option. [3] Compy at his fittest – the green bar shows your level of health. [4] Getting a little too close. [5] The eye shows that Sarah's Instinct level is good, but obviously not good enough. [6] Kill or be killed. [7-9] More cases of ridiculously close combat. [10] The most fun you can have with this game – tossing away unwanted lunch. [11] Stealing the limelight. [12] Back at the very beginning, and it looks like fun. Prepare to be sorely disappointed.

Lost World: Jurassic Park

- (1) The big fella should be more than a match for Compy, but dextrous dodging will win the day – just like David and Goliath a million years later.
 (2) A quiet stroll in the primeval forest – perhaps a little too quiet...



Don't try to explore the game's

not up to it. Run, jump, dodge, eat.

That's what dinosaurs do.

and you're no different

dinosaurs do, and you're no different. Don't start getting high ideas about discovering your environment and your place in it; you have a brain the size of a walnut and you eat things before they eat you.

The same criticism concerning not knowing what's coming next can be made with the obstacles you'll meet. Nobody minds secrets where you open a box without knowing what's inside, but if the contents are dangerous then, for the sake of gameplay, you want to be able to get out of the way before they do you too much damage. Or kill you.

Then there's the point of realism; okay, so *Jurassic Park* was no documentary, and we're not going to get silly and demand that creatures only ever meet if they're from the same time period; but did T-Rex really run along in a straight line, eating swarms of prehistoric chickens purely because if he didn't, they'd eat him? In the game, these little fellows hunt in packs and show no fear. Indeed they actively seek out the king of the dinos, seemingly for the sheer sport of it. Even the herbivores come looking for a bite out of your tail. And if you do manage to catch a human, and you wrestle him to the

ground and hear his death cry, do you expect him to get back up and start shooting at you as soon as your back is turned? All these features are obviously there to make the game more playable, and that would be excuse enough if the devices worked, but they don't.

Sure, the sheer quality of the graphics make some moves a delight to watch – rolling and leaping, tossing your freshly killed prey carelessly into the air because you've had your fill for today, and you only killed them because it's a 2D kill-or-be-killed world out there. But this kind of fun is short-lived and getting it in the first place is hard work.



► the 'Lost World' isn't a place you can wander around and discover (because it doesn't exist – it's only a backdrop to your creature's progress through the level) your instincts will rightly tempt you to make a bee-line for the level exit. Get the level over as quickly as possible before you die.

Not that you'll manage that until you've had a fair few runs, because you don't know where you're going.

This brings us on to the dreaded 'leap of faith' – an undeniable flaw in any game. There are certain points in *Lost World* where you can't see where you're going, even when you've got plenty of time to look. There are lots of precipitous leaps that will result in instant death if you miss them – and miss them you will, the first few times at least, because you can't see where you're supposed to be landing.

You must also avoid inadvertently getting involved in any scraps going on out of sight behind a tree, as well as any trouble off to the left of the screen, where you're not really supposed to go as it's a dead end and the exit is the other way. Don't try to explore – the game's not up to it. Run, jump, dodge, eat. That's what



Alternatively...

Pandemonium	9/10	PSM14
Spider	7/10	PSM20
Lost World	3/10	PSM24

Leaping lizards!



The game comes complete with a mini-encyclopedia, covering various creatures of the Cretaceous and Jurassic periods. Some of these you get to play – namely, the T-Rex, the most famous of the dinosaurs, and also a popular musical group from the '70s, the velociraptor of *Jurassic Park* fame, and the compsognathus, known as 'Compy' to his friends. Featured here are some of the more colourful, non-player characters. They're all as pretty, as these pictures show, but really, for a PlayStation game, we'd expect more than good looks...

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:

Top drawer 8

■ GAMEPLAY:

Spurious 1

■ SOUND:

Film score 6

■ PRESENTATION:

Excellent 9

■ LIFESPAN:

Extinct 1






■ ORIGINALITY:

That's not the idea 5

If you want great graphics, watch the film that this is based on. The game is virtually unplayable, due to the strange controls, and it's not worth the effort learning them.

3
out of 10

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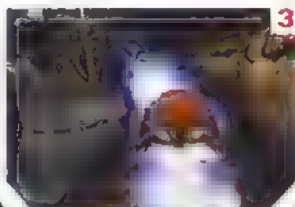
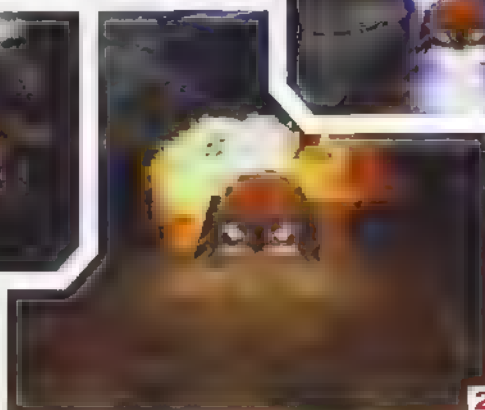
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PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts DEVELOPER: Cryo
 RELEASE DATE: September ORIGIN: United States
 PRICE: £39.99 STYLE: 3D shoot 'em up



PlayTest

[1] The tunnel sections remind one of *Descent*.
 [2] Oops! Flaming hell - that was close [3] With this weapon, it's just too easy! [4] As well as vicious cranes there are some nasty robots to contend with.



Hard Boiled

Frank Miller's classic comic strip comes to life on the PlayStation.
 Hearty breakfast or dog's dinner?

Enter a nightmare world of the future. A world where you are no longer certain of your own identity; where pimps and addicts are typical people. A world controlled by a grossly fat tyrant whose insane greed is the only thing you really can be sure of... Enter the world of *Hard Boiled*.

Pity about the game, though. When a 3D adventure or shoot 'em up might have been more appropriate, Cryo's ode to *Hard Boiled* on the PlayStation turns out to be just an excuse to create another blaster. It bears far greater resemblance to a succession of recent games like *Descent* and *Wipeout 2097* than it does the dark future described in Frank Miller's graphic novel. True, you are apparently playing Nixon, the hero of the comic strip, but you are also hidden in a faceless and not altogether convincing spaceship. Your task? To blast everything in your path along a series of bombing missions. En route you are faced by cranes and diggers which swipe at you, ships and robots which shoot at you, and increasingly difficult baddies which must be destroyed at the end of each level. You know the sort of thing.

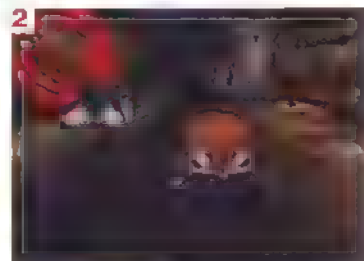
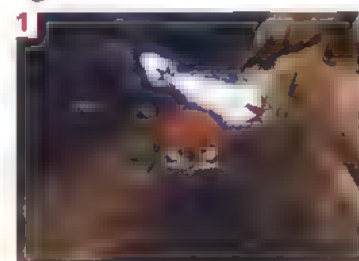
And that's *Hard Boiled*'s problem: we've all been there, shot it up, and decided not to buy the T-shirt. There would be relatively few complaints if this was a good blaster, but it isn't. In fact, it has a strangely old-fashioned feel, despite some smart background graphics.

As you're rail-roaded down a series of runs, there's little to do but dodge and keep pounding the fire buttons. Sure, you can pick up missiles and power-ups, but these only make the player feel more redundant than ever. There isn't even much in the way of options - no choice of ship, no choice of places to start from... Snore...

Huh? Oh, sorry. Yes, *Hard Boiled* will please few people, being neither a chainsaw massacre with a huge bodycount nor a flyer which is in any way involving. Frank Miller fans are sure to be disappointed, while fly-by-wire gamers won't fancy too many trips in a rust bucket that falls way short of state of the art.

Alternatively...

<i>Wipeout</i>	9/10	PSM
<i>Descent</i>	9/10	PSM
<i>Tunnel R1</i>	9/10	PSM16
<i>Hard Rags</i>	5/10	PSM16
<i>Hard Boiled</i>	4/10	PSM16



[1] Eat this, mother! (The missiles in this game really do home in on their targets.) [2] Careful! The red spiral thing zips you along at high speed.

Official UK
PlayStation
 Magazine 24

VERDICT
 GRAPHICS: Smart; not *Hard Boiled* 5 GAMEPLAY: Archaic 4
 SOUND: Blam! Kkk-powl! 5 PRESENTATION: Not much to it 4
 LIFESPAN: It's big but... 4 ORIGINALITY: Sigh... 4

Despite bearing the same name as Frank Miller's memorable work, this is merely a forgettable blaster. In fact, in game development terms, it's decidedly soft-boiled.

4
 out of 10



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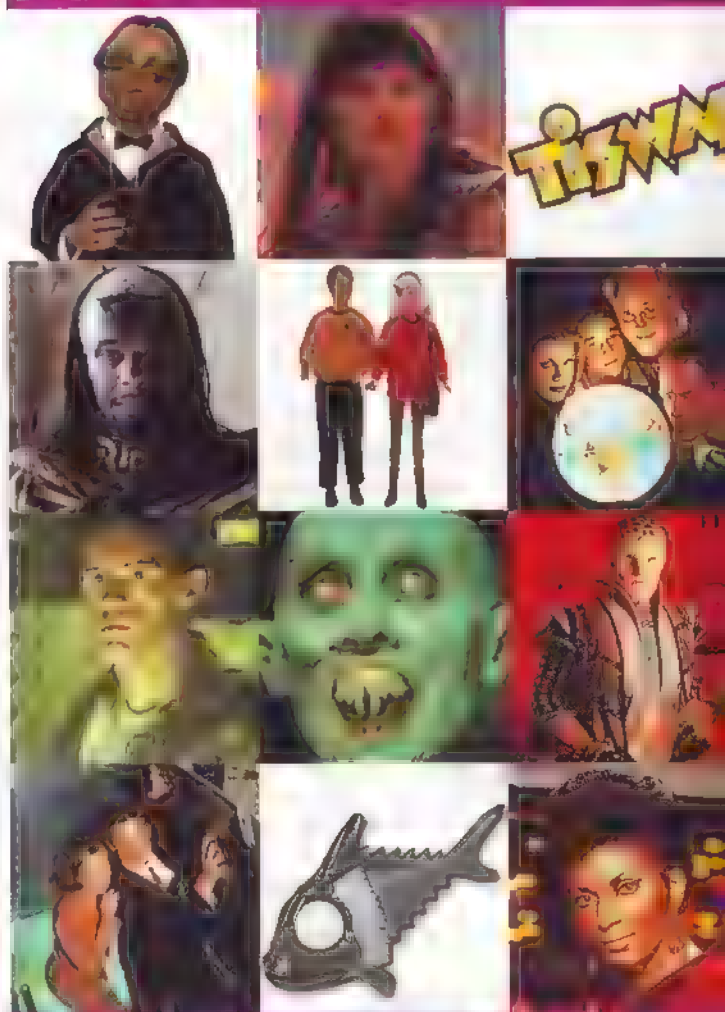
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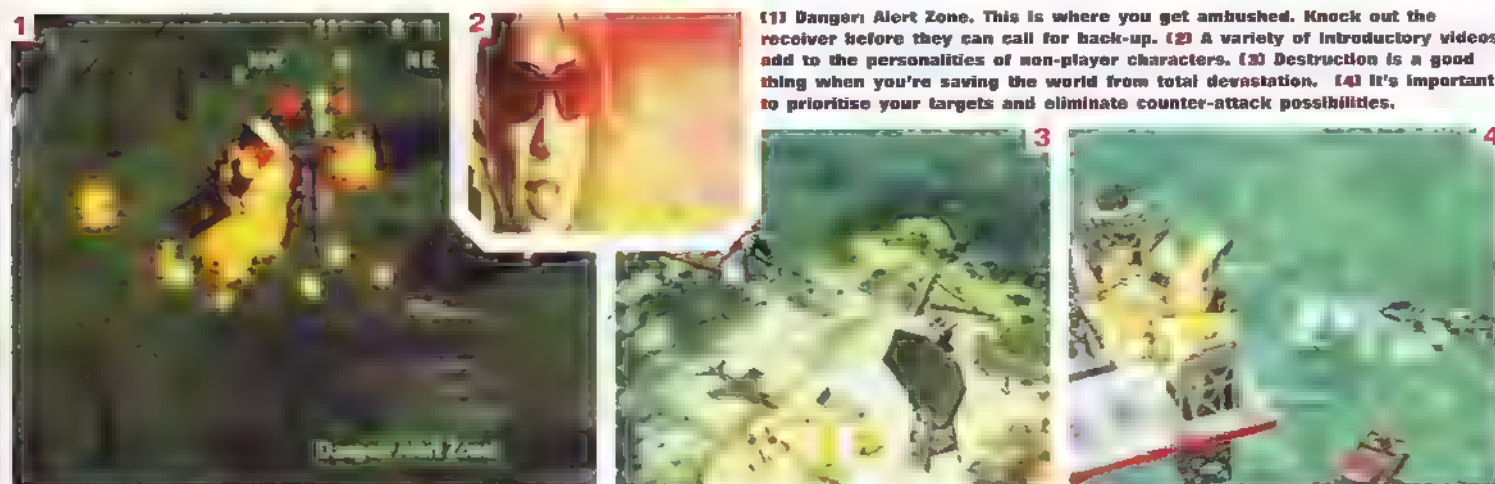


Future
PUBLISHING

■ PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts ■ DEVELOPER: In-house
 ■ RELEASE DATE: September ■ ORIGIN: United States
 ■ PRICE: £44.99 ■ STYLE: Helicopter sim



PlayTest!

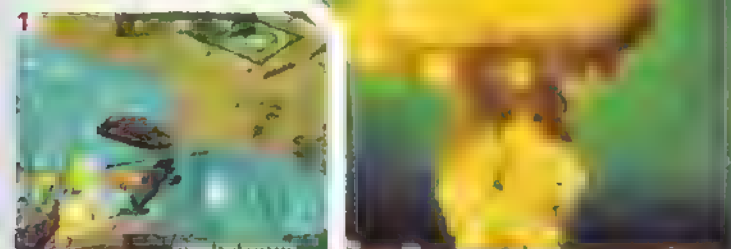


(1) Danger! Alert Zone. This is where you get ambushed. Knock out the receiver before they can call for back-up. (2) A variety of introductory videos add to the personalities of non-player characters. (3) Destruction is a good thing when you're saving the world from total devastation. (4) It's important to prioritise your targets and eliminate counter-attack possibilities.

Nuclear Strike

It's not much of a simulation, but it is an **intriguing strategy game**. This is your chance to **kill lots of people** and blow up their cars. All in the name of peace, of course

(1) Coming in to land from the north-east.
 (2) A nuclear explosion mushroom cloud. Yesterday. Just what we're trying to avoid.



by the scenario – you fly for a peace-keeping force that tries to avert potential wars by equalising the balance of power between the two opposing factions. You measure your success in terms of wars that don't happen. And how, exactly, is that objective achieved? By blowing seven shades out of the super or party before they launch a nuclear offensive, of course. The result is some perfectly wholesome fun, politically justified, and all in the name of peace. Just like the Vietnam war. It now only remains for you to kill the baddies and save the goodies, including several key ground operatives who've got themselves into a pickle at the hands of the enemy, er, potential aggressor.

You are given a series of cleverly integrated missions, some of which you can combine. To succeed in any of them, you will need information. At first, a little will suffice, like 'where are they? Let me at them', but later you'll require much more detail concerning your target's location, number, weaponry and objectives. This graduated introduction to the intricacy of the game is well done – you're not bombarded with boring stuff you'll never need to know. Rather, you will learn that you need to find things out, and then you'll go looking through the menus for the information you require.

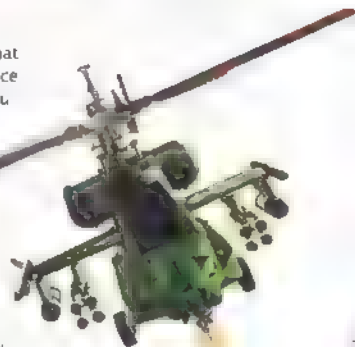
This strategic side of the game is by far what's ►

Helicopter simulations, on a very basic level, give you the power to do two things: fly a helicopter about and, hopefully, shoot things and/or people. *Nuclear Strike* allows you to fly in four directions and provides you with up to four types of weaponry to shoot things with – one for each button. That doesn't sound like a lot of options for a game and, in itself, it's not, but the strength of this game lies not in learning how to fly a helicopter (that's easy; just open the throttle and steer), but in the intrinsic need to collect and collate information in order to succeed in your 'missions' – as we helicopter pilots like to call them.

Nuclear Strike takes you to a political tinderbox in the imaginary county of 'Indocine', which is located unsurprisingly, in Indochina, and more specifically, Burma. The combat is straight out of Vietnam, though, as are the combatants. The game is politically justified

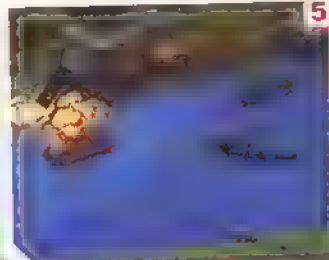
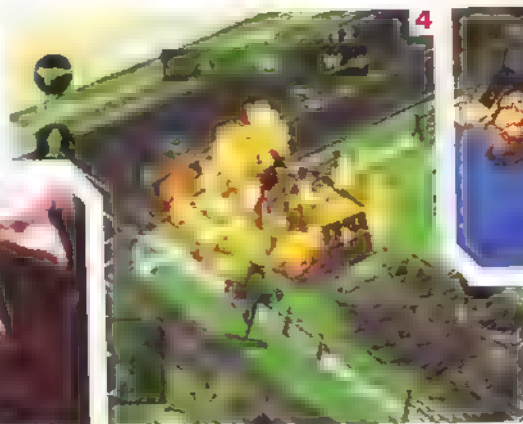
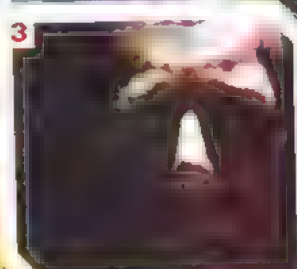
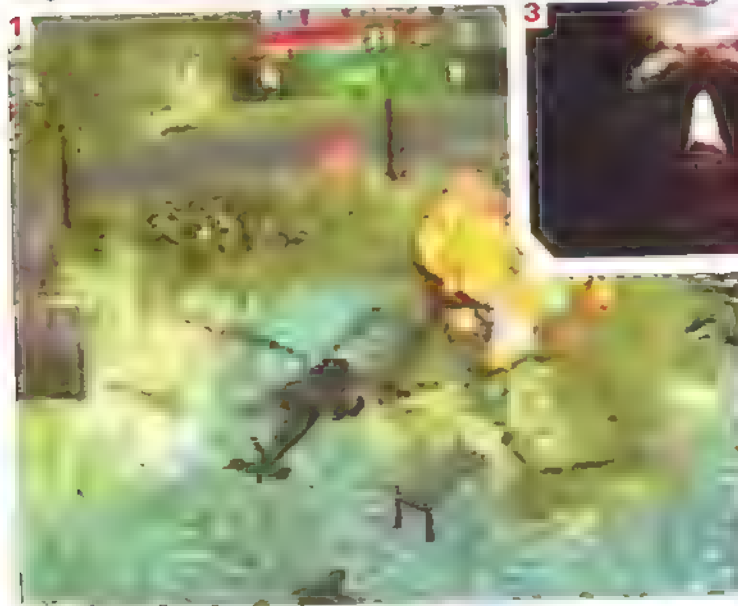
through the menu options and thinking about

[actually shooting them]



Playtest

(1) The compass bar at the top of the screen is only one of the information options available to you. (2) A flying machine of some description. (3) This man is your friend and ally. He gets very upset with anybody bent on nuclear destruction. Rightly so, too. (4) Another satisfying explosion. (5) Some villages are friendly, some aren't. Check your radar.



As well as making things explode,

you'll be escorting allies, rescuing innocents,

collecting ammo and receiving

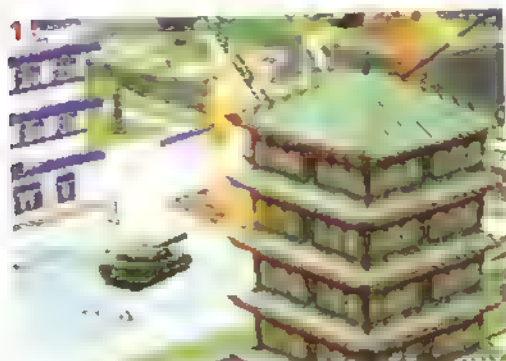
messages from your superiors.

► best about it. There is a big shoot 'em up element, but *Nuclear Strike* is very much designed with the strategy gamer in mind. At first you won't notice this, but soon you'll be spending rather more time sifting through the menu options and thinking about killing people than you will actually shooting them. There is considerable variety in the tasks you'll get, too. As well as making things explode and using your immense firepower on virtually defenceless humans, you'll be escorting allies, rescuing innocents, collecting fuel, armour and ammo and receiving messages from your

superiors. All of which you will obey, because you are a soldier. And a damn fine one, too. Or at least you will be by the time morning comes around again because once you've got into this game, it's difficult to put it down. Not just because it's good, but because you'll be worried that if you leave it alone for a while, you'll forget what you've learned about your next objective.

But there are three criticisms that should be made that may affect your decision to add this simulation to your collection. Firstly, although we thought that one of the big advantages of being in a helicopter in a combat zone was that your aerial position afforded you considerable advantages in having an increased field of vision, in *Nuclear Strike* you are usually dependent upon your radar systems to view your targets' locations. This doesn't restrict you too much in terms of being able to play the game, once you've understood how to read this information, but you often feel that you just can't see far enough. Perhaps it's all just a question of scale, but in terms of gameplay, this restriction is a fault.

Secondly, you have very little control over the speed of your craft – you're either moving along at a steady, though hardly exhilarating pace, or you're coming to a standstill, which isn't wise as you are constantly reminded that 'a sitting duck is a dead duck', either by game prompts or the more pressing problem of a hail of



(1) A beautiful pagoda. It would be such a shame to see it razed to the ground under a rain of missiles and rockets. (2) You can centre your craft on the screen by pressing the Start button.



it's difficult to put it down... because I learned about your next objective

The third and final criticism is that the game is spoiled by the fact that you are always operating within a restricted area. Try to go outside that area and the

Still, this remains an intriguing simulation with many levels of gameplay, depending on how deep you want to go and how badly you want to succeed. We can only assume that all the technical information concerning vehicles is correct as we were too young to fight in Vietnam, and not nearly American enough. This is fortunate for us because this is one case where the simulation is much more fun than the real thing. By some way, according to the films

<i>Thunderbolt 2</i>	8/10	PSM3
<i>Quantor Strike</i>	7/10	PSM2
<i>Soviet Strike</i>	7/10	PSM3
<i>Strikepoint</i>	8/10	PSM3

■ GRADIENTS

■ GRAPHICS+

Limited view 4

■ GAMEPLAY:

Tricky 

■ **SOUND:**

Good explosions 7

■ PRESENTATION

Up to scratch **5**

■ LIFESPAN

Very involved 9

■ ORIGINALITY:

Hardly 2

'Information is power', you're often reminded, and there's a lot of information here to collect and collate, giving you plenty of levels to operate on.

7 out of 10

[illegible]

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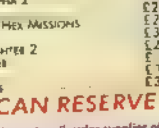
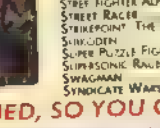
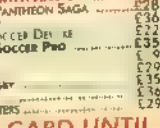
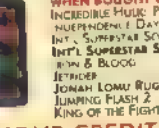
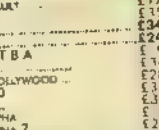
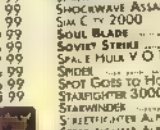
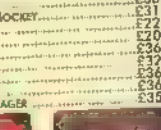
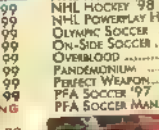
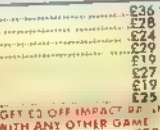
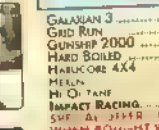
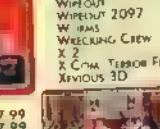
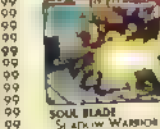
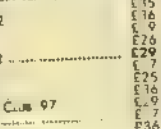
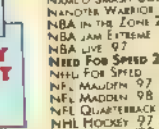
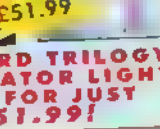
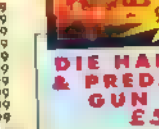
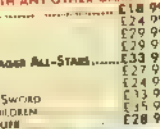
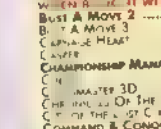
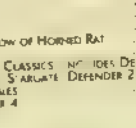
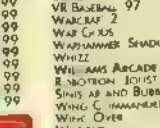
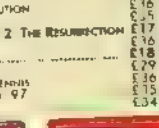
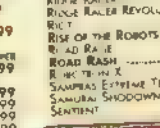
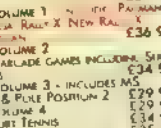
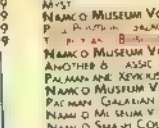
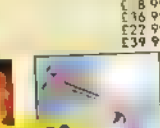
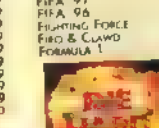
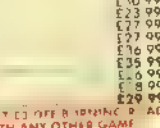
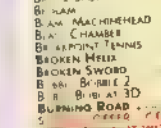
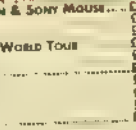
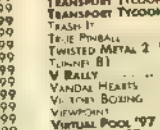
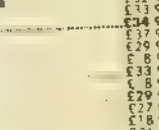
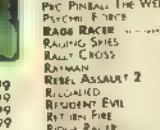
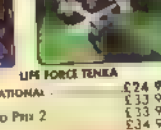
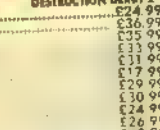
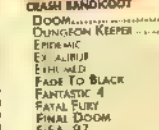
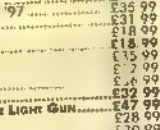
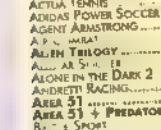
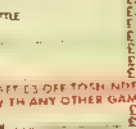
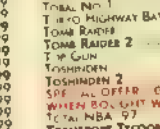
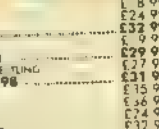
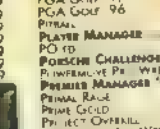
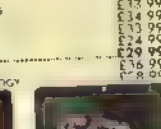
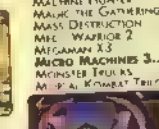
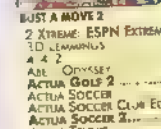
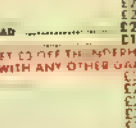
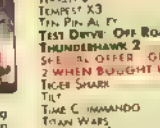
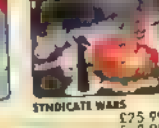
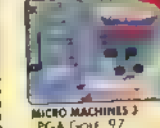
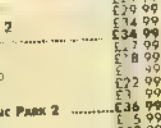
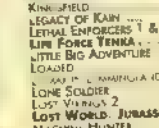
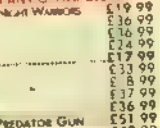
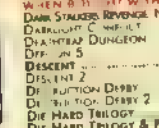
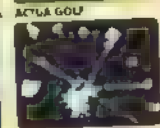
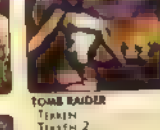
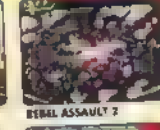
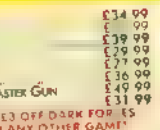
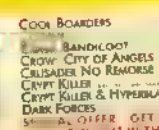
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TOP SECRET

This month Konami's compelling wargame and PlayStation StarPlayer *Vandal Hearts* (PSM20) leads PSM's definitive tips and cheats section.

VANDAL HEARTS

Valley of Thieves



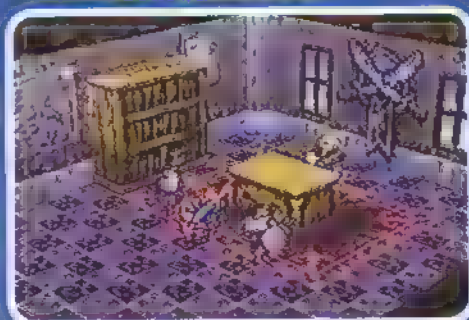
ACT IV: A PREMONITION OF WAR

Valley of Thieves

While on your way to Capital Shumeria, you'll be attacked by Zoot and his accomplices. Attack each enemy individually leaving Zoot 'til last; use the herbs to restore your party's health if required. During battle, keep your party close together for extra support and remember to use Diego for long distance attacks.

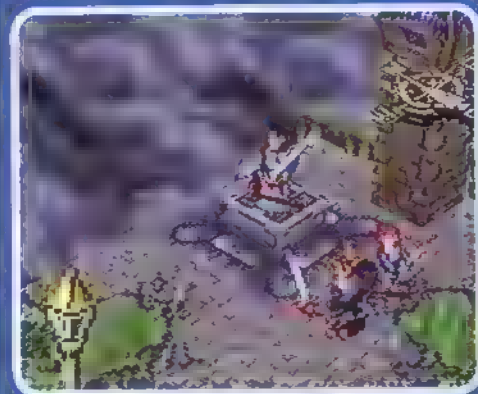
Items: There's a Mad Book located in the circular patch of grass near Zoot's initial position and a light sword on the purple tile to the south-east.

Capital Shumeria



After visiting Security Force HQ, head into the tavern and talk to everyone inside. On leaving the tavern, you'll be told about the riots in the Dover District.

Dover District



Take care of the four War Ghosts, then guide your party over towards the drawbridge. Position a party member on the tile switch and examine it, then continue across the bridge and slaughter the two archers. Stand all three characters in front of the church to enter. Inside you'll meet Count Claymore and Kane.

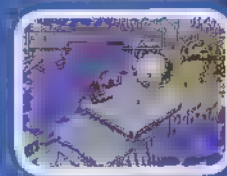
Items: There's a light bow in the circular path on grass in the south corner and a mushroom in the crack on the floor to the south of the drawbridge. Both the treasure chests contain herbs.

Capital Shumeria

After Security Force HQ, visit the shop and spend your hard-earned gold on some new weapons, armour and herbs – you're gonna need them. Now leave Capital Shumeria and head to the Palace Ruins.

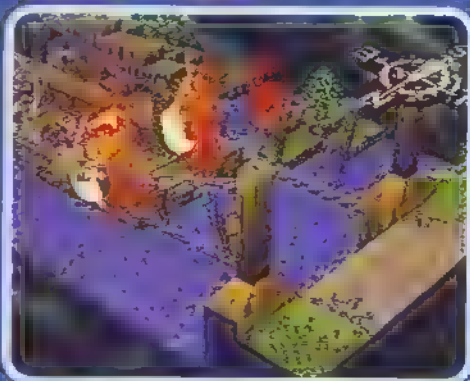
Palace Ruins

Work your way around the map, destroying the Golems one by one. The boulders on the bridges can be pushed and used to damage any Golems in their path. When all the Golems have gone, you'll meet Eleni, who'll want to join your party. You do have the option to refuse but she'll join you anyway, and so will her friend Huxley.



Items: The treasure chest to the south contains an Elixir and the one to the north a herb. There's also a Fire Gem that's located on the circular path of grass to the south.

Rhine Bridge



During this battle you must keep advancing across the bridge to avoid falling in and to use Huxley's powers to heal party members when required. It's here where you'll meet Kira - she'll help you during the battle and eventually join your group.

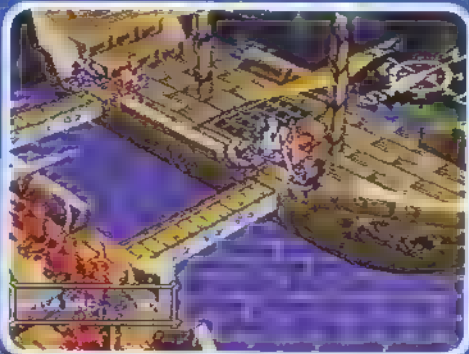
Port City Minato

Visit the shop for more herbs, weapons and armour as required, then enter the tavern and talk to everyone inside. Just as you're leaving, the barman will tell you of a sailor called Grog. Visit Grog's house, then leave the town and make your way to the Sand Dunes of Sea.

Sand Dunes of Sea

While fighting the giant Sand Ant, always attack its head for maximum damage. Surround the ant's head with your party for extra support and use Eleni's Dark Star spell to speed things up. If any of your team become paralysed, use Elixir to cure them.

Port City Minato



After Grog agrees to take you to Glibaris Island and joins your party, enter the tavern again and talk to the woman inside - she'll give you the Key of Nova. Give the Key of Nova to Ash, then enter the Dojo. This will allow your party to undergo the Trials of Lordah. Now leave the town and head for Gadar Sea.

Gadar Sea

As soon as the battle begins, position your party at the end of each gangplank so that no enemies can board your ship and to give yourself maximum

support. You'll need to use spells and herbs during this battle to keep certain members active.

ACT 2: ISLAND OF MADNESS

Village of Yuzu

Once in the village, you must destroy all the statues, but not the villagers. Use the crates and Eleni's Spellbind spell to keep the villagers on the lower levels while working your way around and destroying the higher statues. After talking to the Mayor, visit the shop for some better weapons and armour then head into the tavern and talk to everyone inside.

Items: The chest to the south contains a herb and the one to the east contains a bottle of Mage Oil. There's a mushroom hidden in the circle of grass on the platform to the north and some Moonpie on the crate to the south.

Ygdna Canyon



This is where Dolan, Amor and Sara join your group. If Dolan dies during this next battle you'll have to start again. Use the small hill and your archers to your advantage while attacking the guard dogs near the switch. As well as causing injury, the boulders can be used to shelter from enemy attacks. After the battle is over you'll return to the village. Visit the tavern, Dojo and shop as required.

Items: The chest to the north contains an Elixir and the chest to the south a Moon Ring. You'll also find a Macroman on the circular path of grass to the north-west and a Mad Book located in the crater tile to the south-west.

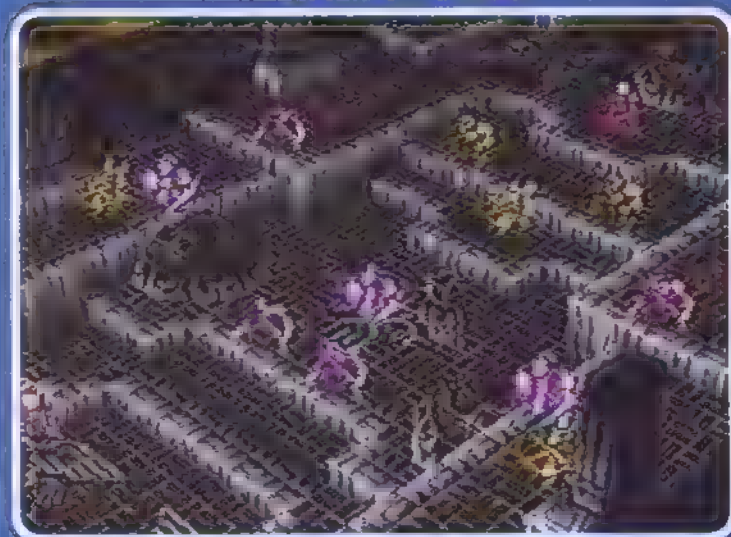
Loris Beach

While moving around the beach, avoid positioning any of your party members on the purple swamp tiles as it will poison them. Keep a close formation to increase support and use healers to restore health when needed. Before the battle ends you must collect the banana.

Items: The banana is located in the centre of the swamp area on the southern edge of the map.

Return to the village and visit the tavern. Inside, talk to the young man - he'll give you the Key of Earth for collecting the banana. Use the shop to stock up provisions and the dojo if required. Remember to equip Ash with the Key of Earth before entering the dojo.

Castle Ruins



For this battle you must split into two groups. Keep close to the walls as you advance to the switch to avoid injury from the archers above. Once on the ramparts, use the boulders to your advantage. At the entrance to the ruins, you'll have the chance to return to the village for supplies. Inside the ruins, you'll meet Magnus. Dunbar and another battle will proceed. Use your archers on either side to deal with the warriors and Eleni's Spellbind spell on the Golems. As you approach Magnus, spread everyone out to avoid his Rainbow Stroke and keep their health as high as possible. To defeat Magnus you'll need to surround him. Once the battle is done and Magnus, Eleni and Huxley have been imprisoned, Ash decides to rescue them. In this next battle, with the guard dogs, you must defeat them within six moves otherwise they'll raise the alarm. Spread your party out to cut off all paths and use your bowmen and Hawknight's range to your advantage.

Items: There's a bottle of mage oil and a Moon Ring in the chests, an iron boot under the tile on the centre battlement and chain mail on the cross shaped patch of grass to the north. During the battle with the guard dogs, there's a Mage Gem hidden in the circular patch of grass in the south-east corner.

ACT 3: ESCAPE TO TOMORROW

Plain of Sorrows

After burying Magnus, you'll be confronted by Sparkies. This is an extremely easy battle to win and an ideal opportunity to practice Sara's and Ash's spell casting.

Remote City

Enter the tavern and talk to everyone inside for more back ground information. As you leave the

your party.



Plain of Sorrows

Zohar will set up four towers in an attempt to gather energy to recreate the warp home, but before this happens you'll be attacked by more Sparkies. Surround the nearest tower and defend it for five rounds, you'll now be warped back home.

Terasu Village

Keep Ash's party on the bridge for the beginning of the battle to avoid side attacks. Use the boulders to your advantage but watch out for the Giant Bats, they have the ability to paralyse their targets.

Items: There's a bag of gold in the circular patch of grass near Zoot's initial position, an Elixir in the chest to the south and a Mega Herb in the second chest.

Basil Gate

Keep your party close together for this battle. You'll need to use your healers to help out any members that become paralysed. Concentrate on your efforts on one enemy at a time before moving on to the next.

Items: The two chests contain a Mage Gem and a Mega Herb. There's a Iron Boot to be found on the tile with a cross on it on the north platform and a parrot in the cross shaped piece of grass in the south-east corner.

Reed Highway

To win this battle you must destroy all enemies before they get the chance to raise the alarm. Don't move any of your party members for the first three moves - as soon as you do, you'll alert the enemies. Use Huxley to activate the switch and move the crate to block the bridge and Ash's Rolling Fire Spell to cause damage.

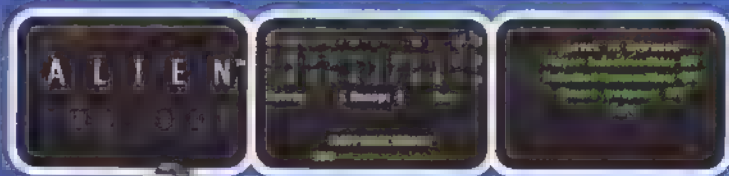
Items: The tile with crater near Landi's initial position contains a magic staff.

Prision Fortress

For this battle you must attack the Juggernauts from behind to cause any damage. Try to position your party so that the Juggernauts can't stand against a wall, as this will limit your attacks.

Items: The six treasure chests contain the following: Mega Herb x2, Mimic x2, Spirit Staff and a grim helm. Use the map to help you find your way around.

ALIEN TRILOGY



Master Code

IGOTFIMK8C1DB00N5ON

Enter this code at the password screen to access the cheat menu. This'll give you unlimited weapons, health and ammo you'll also be able to choose where to start in the game.

Level Select

G0LVXX XX

Enter this code at the password screen to select the where you want to start. Replace the last two XXs with the level number where you wish to start.

Episode passwords

Episode 1

5448848TLD89RBRQV8TL8LMCGH29G3E

Alien 2

9V8Q58D6T8D8548ZLB8TL8LM8QN09D8

Alien 3

438QV8CDH3D89486QV8LD8LMCBWM9GVC

DESTRUCTION DERBY



Enter these codes instead of your name for the following cheats:

EDAMAGE! Makes your car invincible.

INPLAYERS Select number of cars (only on Practice)

REFLECT! Hidden track. (Ruined Monastery)

FADE TO BLACK

Passwords

Level 01: SQUARE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, X, CIRCLE

SQUARE

Level 02: TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, X, CIRCLE, SQUARE

(X)

Level 03: X, CIRCLE, X, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, X

Level 04: X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE

TRIANGLE

Level 05: SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, X

TRIANGLE

Level 06: TRIANGLE, X, X, X, X, CIRCLE

Level 07: CIRCLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, X

TRIANGLE, X

Level 08: SQUARE, SQUARE, X, TRIANGLE

SQUARE, SQUARE

Level 09: TRIANGLE, X, X, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE

TRIANGLE

Level 10: X, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE

TRIANGLE, X

Level 11: CIRCLE, SQUARE, X, X, SQUARE, X

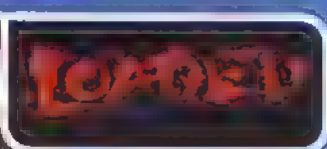
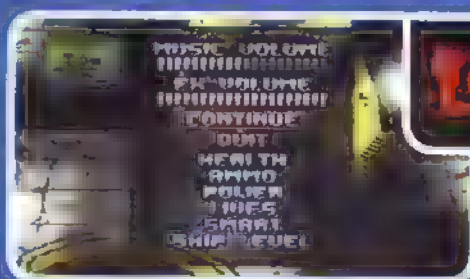
Level 12: SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE

CIRCLE, X

Level 13: X, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, CIRCLE, X

(use this code if you fail to save the girl)

LOADED



Pause the game then while on the in-game options screen, press and hold L1 and L2 for 10 seconds, then enter the following codes:

Health

RIGHT, RIGHT, LEFT, DOWN, DOWN, UP, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE

Ammunition

DOWN, RIGHT, CIRCLE, LEFT, RIGHT, CIRCLE

Power

DOWN, RIGHT, DOWN, RIGHT, TRIANGLE

Lives

LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT, TRIANGLE, X, CIRCLE

Smart Bombs

R1, R2, X, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, R1, R2, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE

Level Skip

K, R1, TRIANGLE, R1, SQUARE, CIRCLE, R2, R2, K, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X

Level Select

UP, RIGHT, DOWN, LEFT, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, X, SQUARE, X, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE

RALLY CROSS

Enter these cheats on either the High Score table or the New Season name input to activate the following:

stone Heavy cars

feather Light cars

float Low gravity

fat tires Increase tyre size

no wheels Cars float

let me Wins the rookie season

im a pro Wins the veteran season

invisious No mud or water slow-down

banzai turns off collision with other vehicles

gradbrad Realistic gravity

spinner Cars wheels can turn to 90 degrees





Title Screen Tricks

Extra Info

Figure 1. The study area.

After starting a race, turn around and drive back around the track. Head towards and into the steel wall, if you're fast enough you'll pass through onto a mirror image of the track.

Indicate War
The Official Game of the World War II Strategy Game



● 2010年10月1日

All Weapons

During the introduction, press: UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN.



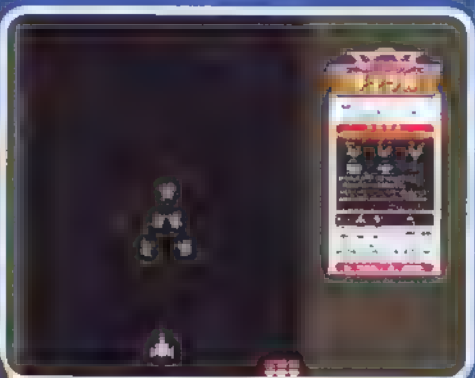
characters in the game.

[illegible]

Beat entire game without continuing.

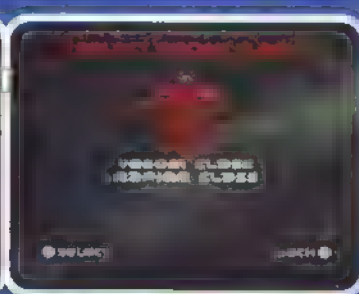
2008年10月16日 星期四

Beat the Galazian game at the beginning.



ELECTIONS UN-RECORDED & UNRECORDED

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Access Rapien class

To access the Rapier class, highlight One Player then press and hold: **L2, R2, LEFT, START** and **SELECT**.

Hidden Track

To access the hidden track called Firestar, highlight One Player then press and hold: **L1, R1, RIGHT, START, SQUARE** and **CIRCLE**. Now press **X**.



Turbo Start

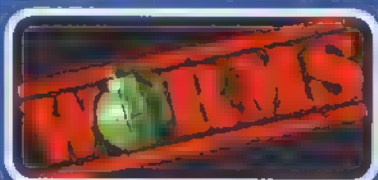
To achieve a turbo start, you must keep the rev bar on the second line from the end when the announcer says "Go".

[illegible]

and **SQUARE** together seven times to access some new weapons.

2000-2001 年 12 月 31 日

709356 [REDACTED]
29726 Low Bridge
46465 Martianscape
57805 Another Martianscape
70345 Lollipop
87355 [REDACTED]
149147 [REDACTED]
308043 [REDACTED]
326576 Crowded Alienscape
436642 Hell
4802043 [REDACTED]
5154527 Lollipop Bridge
7007230 Snow Joke
847221 [REDACTED]
13410325 Life's a Beach
23418990 All Reached Up
9054687 Beach Weather
56439956 The Tide is High
62332782 Forestscape
77004498 Alianscape
99426730 Cliffs of Hell
203953110 Alien Bridge
223981979 Christmas Tree
309072302 Jungle Island
635199159 Cliffs and Lake
733737544 Another Alienscape
742182075 Another Forestscape
954338916 Bless You
1408066876 Another Landyscape
3329407250 Snorkel Island
7373888390 Fires of Hell
8902116313 Jungle
CHEZY Hollow Mountain



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1BB

01895 456700

BMG Interactive

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0171 973 0011

Bullfrog

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01483 579399

Codemasters

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01926 814132

Core Design

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01302 325225

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01628 423666



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New PlayStation games for your old ones
NEW GAMES
All new war
Bunnie 2D
Carnage
Finger Killer
Killed
Lord of the Rings
Mortal Kombat
Naruto
Purified
Rage
Road Rage
Speedy
Star Wars
The War of the Worlds
Tomb Raider
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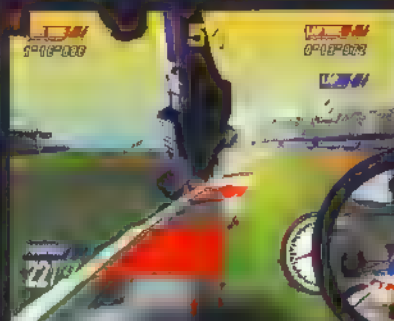
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On the CD



On our lucky number-seven disc, we have the most eagerly-awaited sequel ever in *FI '97*. It's not available in the shops for a few more weeks, so have a try of the game exclusively with PSM. Also on display is SCE's stunning water-based racer *Rapid Racer*, the excellent action adventure *Nightmare Creatures* and two other little treats.

Formula 1 '97



■ PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
■ STYLE: Racing sim
■ PROGRAM: Playable demo

When you talk about the most anticipated software releases of the year, *FI '97* must surely figure close to the top. Within two months, after the release of the first game, we were receiving letters and phonecalls asking for details on the sequel. Now, finally, *FI '97* is on the last corner, due in the shops next month. It's a good deal more sophisticated than the previous effort, the developers having used the PlayStation's hi-res mode for all the in-game graphics. Aside from the graphical improvements (and there are loads) there have been plenty of changes in the gameplay to make the game more realistic than ever.

The differences between the Arcade and Grand Prix modes are also more apparent, with two very different styles of racing required. In the Arcade mode you can chuck the car round corners, fling it into powerslides and not worry about the slightest bump ending your game; try any of this in the Grand Prix mode, however, and your race will be over very quickly indeed. Plus you can make the game as easy or as hard as you wish by changing one of the many options, from damage/off, to real-life mechanical breakdowns (it's incredibly annoying to have your fuel line break within sight of the chequered flag).

Our exclusive demo allows you to take the Benetton car through its paces

(1) No wonder this driver is back in 22nd place. (2) The graphical attention to detail in *FI '97* is quite tremendous. (3) A nasty bit of driving. (4) Wet weather is hard to cope with. (5) The winner!

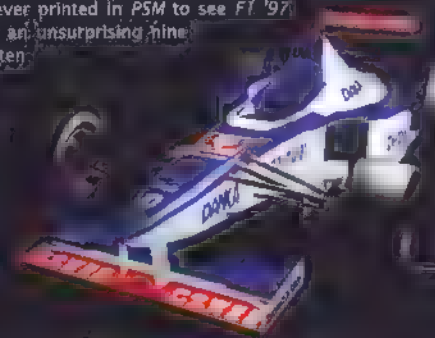


round the wonderful curves of Silverstone. In Arcade mode, after 90 seconds, the demo returns to the menu screen. You can control the car with either the normal D-pad or a N64con.

■ Controls
← Turn left
→ Turn right
Pause
Brake
Accelerate
OK/R Change view

■ Additional Features
The full game features all of the drivers (well, expect Villeneuve for some reason), all of the courses (with a couple of extra ones thrown in for good measure), not mention analogue pad control, Dolby Surround Sound and a split-screen two-player option.

■ Further Information
Turn to page 92 for the biggest review we've ever printed in PSM to see *FI '97* scoring an unsurprising nine out of ten.



Rapid Racer

PUBLISHER: SCE
STYLE: Water racing game
PROGRAM: Playable demo

If you judge development teams by their previous releases, then *Rapid Racer* ought to be fantastic, coming from the same team that brought us *Porsche Challenge* and *Total NBA '97*. Both of these games scored very highly with our reviewers. *Total NBA* being considered the best basketball game on any format. For a long time, river-racing games have looked just like car racing games, with programmers swapping the gray of

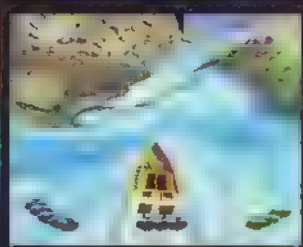
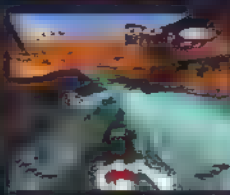
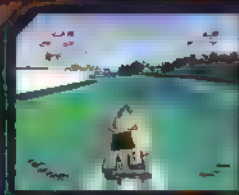
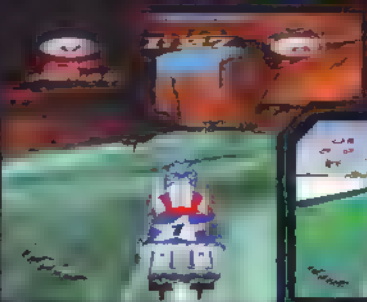
a race track for the blue of water to make it look 'convincing'. With *Rapid Racer*, however, it looks like programmers have finally discovered how to produce very convincing water effects - the current doesn't just flow up and down the river but from bank to bank, creating some incredible waves. How many other games do you find yourself crashing through other racers, wake or having the current throw you helplessly against the treacherous cliffs? Our demo allows you to play the first of 18 tracks. In the same way as *Porsche Challenge* turned out a lot better than the first playable demo we gave you, the developers have told us, *Rapid Racer* is going to be even faster than this demo. It may be tricky to play to start with but once you've played it a few times it becomes much easier.

Controls

- ← Left
- Right
- ▶ Pause
- ⊗ Accelerate
- ⊙ or ⊕ Reverse engines
- Turbo (after you've got a green buoy)
- ⊙ or ⊕ Tight corners

Additional features:
 The finished game will feature a fractal generator creating an incredible 250,000 course variations.

The limitation of water movement is one of *RR*'s best features.



Although the boats seem to just sit on top of the water in these shots, there is a realistic sense of physics to be seen when the game is running on screen.

Nightmare Creatures

PUBLISHER: SCE
STYLE: Action adventure
PROGRAM: Playable demo

The year is 1834 and London is being terrorised by hideous monsters attacking anyone they can find (sounds like a Chelsea match). The hero, Ignatius Blackward (a man of God) or Nadia F., who has sworn to avenge the murder of her father by the leader of the Brotherhood, Adam Crowley. As in *Resident Evil*, both characters have their own advantages. Ignatius is a good all-rounder, perfect for newcomers to the game, while Nadia should only be used once you're a little more familiar with the game as her expert moves can often prove difficult

to pull off. The first level, included in the demo, starts off fairly easily but be warned, things soon get hard after a few monsters.

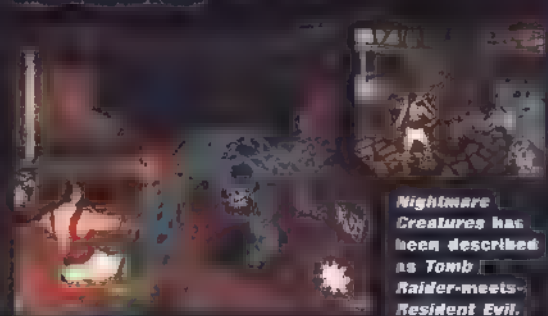
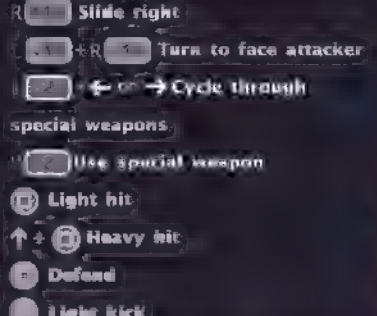
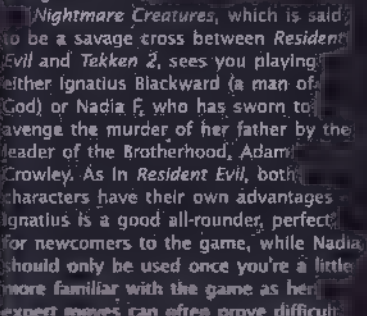
Controls

- ↑ Run forward
- ↓ Jump back
- ← Turn left
- Turn right
- ▶ Pause
- ⊙ Slide left
- ⊕ Slide right
- ⊙ + ⊕ Turn to face attacker
- ⊙ → Cycle through
- special weapons**
- ⊙ Use special weapon
- ⊙ Light hit
- ↑ + ⊕ Heavy hit
- ⊙ Defend
- ⊙ Light kick

- ↑ + ⊗ Heavy kick
- ⊙ Short jump
- ↑ + ⊕ Long jump
- ↑ + ⊙ + ⊕ Spinning weapon strike
- Additional features:**
Nightmare Creatures features beautiful motion-captured animation running at a frighteningly crisp 30fps. Oh, and did we mention it works with the new analogue pad?

Further information:
 We'll be reviewing *Nightmare Creatures* in next month's issue.

A PSM journalist seen the night after the day before.



Nightmare Creatures has been described as *Tomb Raider*-meets-*Resident Evil*.

On the CD

Fantastic Four

GENRE Action
STYLE Scrolling beat 'em up
PROGRAM Playable demo

Normally, a movie or comic book licence means a poor game which relies on famous names or characters for its success. Of the few developers capable of turning a licence into a successful title, Probe are perhaps the most dependable, having already given gamers top titles like *Die Hard Trilogy* and *Alien Trilogy*. So a lot can be expected from their latest incarnation based on Marvel Comics' superheroes, *The Fantastic Four*. Featuring the famous faces of the Thing, Human Torch, Invisible Woman, and Mr Fantastic, the playable demo lets you play through the first stage, battling against the little moloids (they only need two good smacks to get rid of them) and the larger pink dragon-type creatures (watch out for their paralysing breath).

Controls

↑ Walk into the screen



The characters in *Fantastic Four* come from the Marvel comic superheroes of the same name. Other characters encountered in the game include the Thing, Human Torch, Invisible Woman, and Mr Fantastic (who's no doubt pretty bombastic).

- ↓ Walk out of the screen
- ← Walk left
- Walk right
- ← or → Burst of speed
- ▶ Pause
- ⊗ Jump
- ⊙ Block
- ⊙ Attack 1 (Twice to vary attack)
- ⊙ Attack 2 (Twice to vary attack)
- Rear attack Attack 1 or 2 when enemy is behind you
- Throw

- Throw into screen
- Throw out of screen
- R ↑ ↓ Pick up and throw object

Additional features

As well as the Molemen, the *Fantastic Four* will find themselves battling against the likes of Psychoman and Dr Doom across five huge levels in their battle to rid of world of these evil megalomaniacs. If you've got enough friends and a MultiTap you can play all four characters - if not, then you can have the other characters fighting along side you as computerised drones. Very handy.

Further information

The game should be reviewed in our next issue when we'll be giving it a thorough going-over. If you can't wait until then, you ought to turn to page 62 for our *Fantastic Four* Preplay. In a word, it's looking, yes you guessed it, fantastic.

Fantastic Four harks back to the old days of scrolling beat 'em ups seen on 16-bit.

Rosco McQueen

GENRE Action
STYLE Platform action game
PROGRAM Playable demo

When you look at the sort of professionals that make top videogame characters you think of fighter pilots, SAS soldiers, pan-galactic police and journalists (natch) but not really firemen. It's not that they don't do a good job, but they never seem to make a good hero - just look at *Backdraft*. Based incredibly loosely on the '70s disaster flick *Towering Inferno* (you mean you didn't notice the shared surname with a certain '70s hero?), for some reason only known to the

writers of the plot, the bad guy - Sylvester T. Square - decides to burn down his huge towerblock, floor by floor, with our eponymous hero anywhere near the blaze. The game takes a similar look to *Tomb Raider* with the camera sat over Rosco's shoulder while you fight the raging fires.

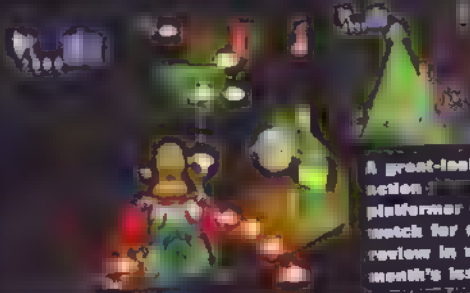
Additional features

The game takes place over 33 levels of Tower X, covering such floors as the gym, car park and the apartments. Not content with using a simple hose, Rosco can pick up water bombs, CO₂ and a huge axe to help him.

Further information

For more details, turn to page 68 for

our PrePlay treatment of this innovative platformer. For the usual in-depth review you'll have to wait until our next issue when we'll give *Rosco McQueen* a roasting.



A great-looking action platformer - watch for our review in next month's issue.

ISS Pro



Croc



PaRappa



Oddworld



Test Drive 4



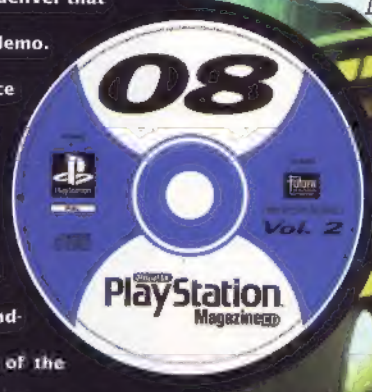
Deathtrap Dungeon



Expect another superb disc next month as we finally deliver that playable *ISS Pro* demo.

There's also a chance to try *PaRappa*, plus playable demos of *Croc*, *Oddworld* and EA's *Test Drive 4*.

Completing the round-up is video footage of the menacing *Deathtrap Dungeon*.



Next Month

Final Fantasy VII

Exclusive UK preview of the world's best-selling PlayStation game

(Lucky you've just read our guide to RPGs, eh?).

The Winter of our Disc Content

The complete guide to what's coming out on PlayStation throughout the rest of 1997

We are two!

It's our birthday, and to celebrate we have a 20-page special on the little grey box. We look at the history of the PlayStation and talk to the people instrumental in its success. We ask leading industry figures for their opinions of PlayStation 2. And we have a retrospective on every PlayStation game ever reviewed in the Official UK PlayStation Magazine (ABC — 146,972 and rising...)

Plus

Colony Wars, Tomb Raider 2, Fighting Force, Nightmare Creatures, Hercules, Rose McQueen, and Barry Davies and Trevor Brooking talking about Actua Soccer 2. Place an order with your newsagent now — there are 146,971 other people after YOUR copy of the magazine!

With a background in the Hollywood film industry, Lorne Lanning is now co-founder of New York-based games developer Oddworld Inhabitants. He is also the driving force behind the *Oddworld* project, a quintet of titles which promise to introduce and establish a new gaming genre on the PlayStation...

L O R N E L A N N I N G

Oddworld is a very strange concept. Where did the inspiration come from for such a project?
Oddworld Inhabitants itself is a strange concept. I'd been writing dozens of bizarre stories for more than 10 years, and over time many of them converged into one massive story. I saw that it would take at least five games to tell this story, so we came up with the *Oddworld* quintology, a series of five games that would be released every other year over the next 8 years. The inspiration for the stories comes from the irony of real life and the injustice to the little guy. Often the little guy is an entire country that just doesn't have the might or the wits to stand up to those more aggressive and greedy forces. Other times, the little guy is a species that isn't capable of defending itself because it doesn't speak our human language.

How long have you been working on it?
I've had the idea for the *Oddworld* quintology for more than 5 years. I began thinking of starting a games company about 6 years ago and it was then that I tried to convince Sherry McKenna to join me. It took me two years to convince her, but Sherry and myself finally founded Oddworld Inhabitants in 1994. Once we got rolling, we spent 26 months building the first game, *Abe's Oddysee*, and we have just gone to gold master.

'We hope that games like Abe's Oddysee will help the industry to get out of its formula-based game design approach and start breaking new, more creative grounds'

We've been hearing big things about the game. What are your expectations for it?
We're very pleased with how it's turned out and, based upon feedback from the interactive demo, the response from the gamesplaying public has been overwhelmingly positive. We're being assured by the retailers that *Abe's Oddysee* will be one of the biggest hits this Christmas. Our expectations, for the big picture, is that games like this will help the industry to get out of its formula-based game design approach and start breaking new, more creative grounds. We see games as the new art form. We take it very seriously in this way.

How big do you expect the Oddworld story to be by the time we get to part five?
One of the things that you will see happen is a

continued merging of game genres. *Abe's Oddysee* was really a synthesis of an action game worked into an adventure game, with a little Hollywood sprinkled on top. The future games will continue to combine genres. The next level is action, adventure, role-playing and strategy, all synthesised into one larger gaming experience. And these'll contain even more Hollywood. As for what else to expect in the games... Each new game will introduce a new hero, but the heroes from the previous titles (like Abe) will also be present. Also, by the fifth title we'll be looking at a game that has over 100 unique characters that all have advanced behaviours, AI, gamespeak, and gut-wrenching humour.

This is your first games project. What drew you to the games industry?

With the advancement in the new technologies (32-bit) we believed that new and more interesting gaming experiences could be produced. We also saw that there was a tremendous amount of creative freedom that could be had if we did things correctly. Creative freedom is what is most important to us - we come from the film industry, which is really quite brutal on creative people because it's run mostly by marketing statistics. The game industry isn't all that different, but because a game can be built for so much less money than a movie, there are many more ways to negotiate more creative freedom.

And what was on your CV prior to that?

Sherry and I both came from the special effects business. Sherry had been producing special effects and computer animation for more than 20 years. I had been technical directing and creative directing computer animation for 10 years. Both of us have done TV commercials, feature films, and simulator attractions for theme parks. We were tired of the business and the lack of creativity. We wanted to get into what was new, what was the future. We wanted to build something really unique that people would love.

Have you always been a games fan, though?

I've been a hardcore gamesplayer all of my life. My dad was an engineer at ColecoVision when I was still in junior high school, so games have been a part of my life since *Pong* - before that it was pinball. I love games, but I just wish the designers would get more creative and start coming up with more unique stuff.

Which are the first games that you played?

Pong was first, then I was addicted to *Asteroids*, then *Missile Command*, then *Robotron* and *Defender*.

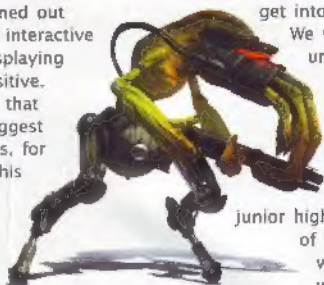
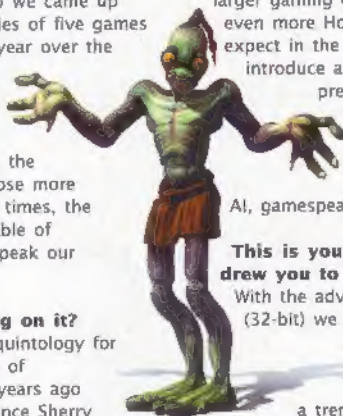
I loved nearly all the classic arcade games, but I didn't start getting into computer games until I saw LucasArts' *Loom* - that was ahead of its time.

Which videogames have influenced your work?

The first time I saw *Prince Of Persia* I said, 'Whoa, this has got something that other games haven't really touched on'. When I played the original *Castle Wolfenstein* I thought the same thing. I was interested in games that pushed the gameplay and the story experience. It made me more involved. Then came *Out Of This World* and *Flashback*. These were great games, though I also realised the limitations in the technology and why they suffered in gameplay aspects. But most of the influence for our games comes from real life... like the way you communicate with a dog.

How much further do you think you can take the PlayStation with the next instalment?

We're currently building the second game in the quintology - *Munch's Oddysee*. It'll have new mechanics, new characters and a LOT of stuff that we haven't yet seen. We've pushed the PlayStation, in many ways, further than anyone else has. What you will see is more push in character interactions and AI advancement. But we won't try to go 3D because the PlayStation just isn't powerful enough to give a gaming experience with smarter characters that have more evolved interactions, beautiful artwork with lifelike animations, AND do realtime 3D. It's just not there yet.



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